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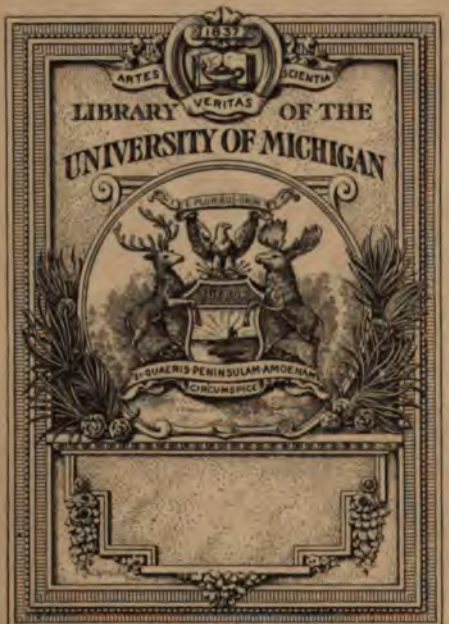
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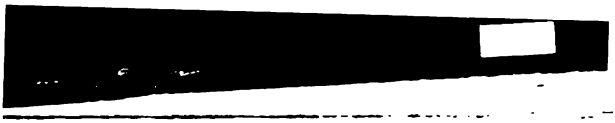

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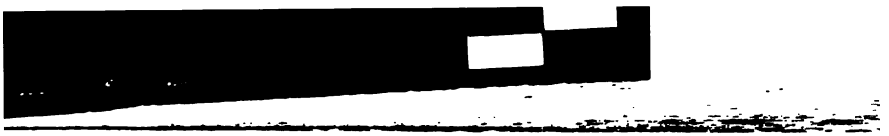

Walker & Boutall, lith.

The Amīr of Afghanistan.

from a painting by the Author.

London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1879.

[redacted]

AT THE
COURT OF THE AMÎR

A NARRATIVE

BY

JOHN ALFRED GRAY, M.B., LOND.

LATE SURGEON TO H.H. THE AMÎR OF AFGHANISTAN

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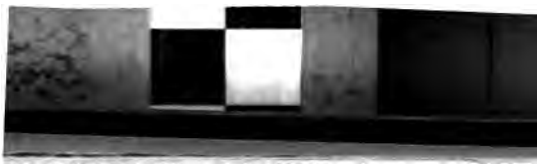

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THE APOLOGY

I WOULD not have thought of inflicting a book on my long-suffering fellow-countrymen, but for the wish expressed by my publishers : for

> "Every fool describes in these bright days
> His wondrous journey to some Foreign Court."

In Afghanistan however, difficult of access, and hence comparatively unknown, there have been, since that strong man Amîr Abdurrahman ascended the throne, such remarkable changes in the administration of the country, and such strides towards civilization, that it was thought a narrative of life there, throwing, possibly, some light on the personality of the monarch, and on the "bent" of the people, might be of general interest.

The book has been written in the intervals of professional work, and, with its shortcomings of diction and style, the only merit it can claim—that of "local colour"—is due to the fact that it was compiled from the letters I wrote from Afghanistan to her who is now my wife.

WADHAM LODGE,
UXBRIDGE ROAD,
EALING, W.

PREFACE

Now that this narrative of life at the Court of the Amîr is about to appear for the second time, it would perhaps be acceptable if one said a few words on the events leading up to the death of that great man Abdurrahman, and the accession of his son Habibullah.

Astute and far-sighted as the Amîr undoubtedly was, it would have taxed even his judgment to choose the right moment for his death : and yet for the good of his country he could hardly have chosen a more opportune moment than the present.

For a country newly consolidated as is Afghanistan, and even yet seething with unrest, it would be a fatal calamity to be plunged again into the civil war that has in the past sapped its strength, and forced its tribes from the peaceful pursuits of cultivation and trade into becoming a nation of fighters and robbers. How and why there was always this storm cloud ready to burst on the death of their late Ruler will be seen in the course of the narrative.

Had the Amîr lived a few years longer, the younger son, who might by some be considered as

having a superior claim to the throne, would have been of an age capable of taking command of men : and, in a country where the supreme rule has so recently been firmly established, there would have been many who, for reasons of sentiment or of gain, would have been ready to throw in their lot with the younger claimant.

Again, a few years back, Habibullah, though he gave promise of firmness and decision, was but a lad with small power ; and the opposing faction, though its nominal head was an infant, was represented by a woman of great strength of character, of royal blood, and with a most valuable ally, in the person of the Commander-in-Chief in Kabul, on her side.

Time was what Habibullah needed to increase his power and grip of events ; and he has had it. Time also was what the other faction needed, but longer time to enable its titular head to attain maturity. The health of the Amîr being precarious, both factions lived in a state of watchfulness and strain. That the Amîr perceived the danger was evident from his oft repeated advice to his sons to "hold together" lest they lost their country and their lives.

The question arises, why did not the Amîr, after the manner of Dôst Mahomed, appoint a successor ? Personally I do not think he could himself decide : so much depended on whether the heir could hold the throne.

Suddenly the younger faction lost, by his death in 1898, the powerful arm of the Commander-in-Chief, Gholam Hyder: and the claims of the elder son at once came into prominence. He was now of mature age, decided in character, and much liked by the people on account of his mild and firm rule while Governor of Kabul.

On October 3, 1901, the Amîr died. How long Habibullah has been holding the reins of government we may learn later; but obviously at the moment he was the only person who could act promptly and avert the threatening danger of riot, which the Afghan loves, and which is so apt to drift into civil war.

I will not attempt the futile task of forecasting events, but with all my heart wish the Amîr Habibullah health and strength to carry on the difficult and dangerous task he has so ably commenced.

JOHN ALFRED GRAY.

EALING.

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AT THE COURT OF THE AMÎR

CHAPTER I

ON THE ROAD TO KABUL

The start and the wherefore. Unsettled condition of Afghanistan. Departure from Peshawur. Jumrûd Fort and the Watch-tower. The Afghan guard. The Khyber defile. Eccentricities of Rosinante. Lunch at Ali Musjid. Pathan villages. Pathans, their appearance and customs. Arrival at Landi Kotal Serai. The Shenwari country Caravan of Traders. Dakka. Dangers of the Kabul River. Mussaks. Camp at Bassawal. Chahardeh. Mountain road by the river. Distant view of Jelalabad.

It was with no small amount of pleasurable excitement that I donned the Afghan turban, and with Sir Salter (then Mr.) Pyne and two other English engineers, started from Peshawur for Kabul to enter the service of the Amîr.

I had made the acquaintance of Mr. Pyne in London, where I was holding a medical appointment. He had returned to England, after his first short visit to Kabul, with orders from the Amîr to buy machinery, procure engineering assistants, and engage the services of an English surgeon.

I gathered from his yarns that, for Europeans at the present day, life among the Afghans was likely to be a somewhat different thing from what it was a few years ago.

In the reigns of Dost Mahomed and Shere Ali it was simply an impossibility for a European to take up a permanent residence in Afghanistan ; in fact, except for occasional political missions, none was allowed to enter the country.

We do, indeed, hear of one or two, travelling in disguise, who managed to gather valuable facts concerning the country and its inhabitants, but we learn from their narratives that the hardships they were forced to undergo were appalling. For ages it has been a proverb among the natives of India that he who goes to Kabul carries his life in his hand. They say, "Trust a cobra, but never an Afghan ;" and there is no denying the fact that the people of Afghanistan have had the credit from time immemorial of being a turbulent nation of highway robbers and murderers. If there were any chance of plunder they spared not even their co-religionists, and, being fanatical Mahomedans, they were particularly "down" on any unfortunate traveller suspected of being a Feringhi and an infidel.

A busy professional life following upon the engrossing studies of Hospital and University, had given me neither time nor any particular inducement to read about Afghanistan, so that when I left England I knew very little about the country. However, on reaching India I found plenty of people ready enough to enlighten me.

I heard, from officers who had been on active service in Afghanistan in 1880, of the treacherous and vindictive nature of the people ; of the danger when they were in Kabul of walking in the town except in a party of six or seven ; of the men who, even taking

this precaution, had been stabbed. I heard, too, a great deal about the assassination of the British envoy in Kabul, Sir Louis Cavagnari, in 1879; of the highway dangers of the two hundred mile ride from the British frontier to Kabul, and, remembering that we were about to trust our lives absolutely for some years to the good faith of these proverbially treacherous Afghans, it struck me we were in for an experience that was likely to be exciting.

What actually happened I will relate.

We were all ready to start from Peshawur one day in March, 1889. The Amîr's agent, a stout and genial old Afghan, named Abdul Khalik Khan, had provided us with turbans, tents, and horses; we had received permits from the Government to cross the frontier, and our baggage was being loaded on the pack-horses when a telegram arrived directing us to await further orders. We were informed that there was fighting among the Pathans in the Khyber, and we were to postpone our departure till it was over. This seemed a healthy commencement.

Three days afterwards, however, we were allowed to proceed. The first day's march was short, simply from the cantonment across the dusty Peshawur plain to Jumrûd fort: about nine miles. The fort, originally built by the Sikhs in 1837, has been repaired and strengthened by the British, who now hold it. It is said, however, to be of no very great value: one reason being because of the possibility of its water supply being cut off at any time by the Afghan hillmen.

The servants, with the pack-horses and tents, took up their quarters in the courtyard, but we four

accompanied the officer in charge up to his rooms in the watch-tower. From here we had an extensive view over the Peshawur valley. The entry to the Khyber was about three miles off to the west. We had left the cantonment early in the afternoon, and soon after our arrival it became dark. We dined, and were thinking of turning in to prepare for our long hot ride on the morrow, when we found, instead, that we should have to turn out.

The fort was not an hotel, and had no sleeping accommodation to offer us. I looked at Pyne. The baggage was down there in the courtyard, somewhere in the dark, and our bedding with it. Should we ——? No! we would roll up our coats for pillows, throw our ulsters over us, and sleep on the platform outside the tower. We were proud to do it. But—the expression "bed and board" appealed to my feelings ever afterwards.

We had an early breakfast.

In the morning we found the guard of Afghan cavalry waiting for us in the travellers' caravansary near the fort. There were about forty troopers—"the Amîr's tag-rag," as the British subalterns disrespectfully called them.

They were rough-looking men, dressed more or less alike, with turbans, tunics, trousers, and long boots. Each had a carbine slung over his shoulder and a sword at his side. A cloak or a rug was rolled up in front of the saddle and a couple of saddle bags strapped behind. They carried no tents. I cannot say they looked smart, but they looked useful. Of the individual men some were rather Jewish in type, good-looking fellows—these were Afghans; and one

or two had high cheek-bones and small eyes—they were Hazaras. All were very sunburnt, and very few wore beards. This last fact surprised me ; I had thought that Mahomedans never shaved the beard.

It is, however, not at all an uncommon thing for soldiers and officers in the Afghan army to shave all but the moustache ; but I learnt that in a Kabul court of law, when it is necessary in swearing to lay the hand upon the beard, that a soldier's oath is not taken : he has no beard to swear by.

The baggage was sent off under a guard of about a dozen troopers. We followed with the rest and entered the gorge of the Khyber. It is a holiday trip now-a-days to ride or drive into the Pass. You obtain a permit from the Frontier Political Officer, and are provided with a guard of two native cavalry-men, who conduct you through the Pass as far as Landi Kotal. This is allowed, however, on only two days in the week, Mondays and Thursdays—the Koffla, or merchant days. The Khyber Pathans have entered into an agreement with the Government that for the payment of a certain subsidy they will keep the Pass open on those two days : will forbear to rob travellers and merchants. Doubtless it is an act of great self-denial on their part, but they keep faith.

Riding along the Pass one sees posted at intervals, on rock or peak, the Pathan sentry keeping guard. He is a fine-looking man, as he stands silently in his robes : tall with black beard and moustache. His head may be shaven or his long hair hang in ringlets over his shoulders. He wears a little skull cap with, may be, a blue turban wound carelessly round it : a

loose vest reaching the knee is confined at the waist by the ample folds of the cummerbund, or waist shawl. In this is thrust a pistol or two and a big ugly-looking knife. The short trousers of cotton, reaching half-way down the leg, are loose and not confined at the ankle like the townsman's "pyjamas." On the feet he wears the Afghan shoe with curved up toe : the ornamental chapli or sandal of leather : or one neatly made of straw. Draped with classical beauty around the shoulders is the large blue cotton lûngi, or cloak. If the morning is cold the sheep-skin postîn is worn, the sleeves of which reach to the elbow. If it rain the postîn is reversed, and the wool being outside shoots the wet off. The next day's sun dries it.

The rifle he has may be an old English musket, a Martini-Henry or a native jezail, but, whatever it be, in the Pathan's hands it is deadly.

The scenery in the Khyber is rugged and wild, the only vegetation being stunted bushes and trees at the bottom of the gorge. The rocky cliffs rise precipitously on either side, and gradually closing in, are, at a little distance from the entry, not more than three or four hundred feet apart. The road at one time leads by the stream at the bottom of the gorge, and later creeping up the mountain it winds in and out round the spurs or fissures half-way up the face of the cliff. It is a good broad road, made, and kept in excellent repair, by the British. Nevertheless, I was far from happy ; my mare, accustomed to a town, was frightened by the rocks, the sharp turns, and the precipices, and desired to escape somewhere, anywhere—and there was no parapet.

By-and-bye, however, we descended and were in a stony valley, for the Pass varies in width from ten or twelve feet to over a hundred yards. Mr. Pyne suggested a canter. A canter! I knew the mare by this time, and I had on only a hunting bit. Off we went. Pyne had a good horse, a Kataghani that had been given him in Kabul, but we swept ahead, my bony mare and I, much to Pyne's disgust—and mine, for I couldn't hold her. Roads! what were roads to her? Away she went straight up the valley, and such a valley! The ground was covered with pebbles and big stones, and cut up by dry water-courses wide and narrow. The narrower gulleys she cleared at a bound, the wider she went headlong into and out of before I had time to hope anything. I soon was far ahead of the guard, only the Captain managed to keep somewhere in my wake, shouting, "Khubardar," "Take care!" I yearned to khubardar with a great yearn, for in addition to the danger of breaking my neck was that of being shot. Sawing at the reins did not check her, and at last I flung myself back, caught the cantle of the saddle with my right hand, and jerked at the curb. I was tossed in the air at every stride, and my loaded revolver thumped my hip at each bound, but her speed diminished, and at last she gave in and stopped, panting and snorting. Then the Captain came clattering up, and I was obliged to turn the mare round and round or she would have been off again. The Captain smiled and said, "Khob asp," "It is a good horse."

"Bally," I said, which means "Yes."

We adjusted the saddle and waited till the others

came up. Pyne remonstrated with me and told me I ought not to have done such a thing, it was not safe! He viewed it as a piece of eccentricity on my part.

About eight miles from Jumrûd, and where the defile is narrow and precipitous, is the Ali Musjid fort. This is built on a high, nearly isolated, rocky hill to the left or south of the road. The small Musjid, or Mosque, from which the place takes its name, stands by the stream at the bottom of the defile. It was erected, according to tradition, by the Caliph Ali. The fort, which is called the key of the Khyber, has at different times been in possession of Afghans and British. We hold it now. The last man we dislodged was General Gholam Hyder Khan, Orak zai, who was then in the service of Amîr Yakûb Khan. He is now Commander-in-Chief of the Amîr's army in Kabul and Southern Afghanistan. He is a big stout man, about six feet three inches in height. When I saw him in Kabul he did not seem to bear any malice on account of his defeat. There is another General Gholam Hyder, a short man, who is Commander-in-Chief in Turkestan, and of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

At Ali Musjid we sat by the banks of the streamlet and hungrily munched cold chicken and bread; for Mr. Pyne had suggested at breakfast our tucking something into our holsters in case of necessity: he had been there before.

Beyond Ali Musjid the narrow defile extended some distance, and then gradually widening out we found ourselves on an elevated plateau or table-land, bounded by not very high hills. The plain was some

miles in extent, and we saw Pathan villages dotted here and there, with cornfields surrounding them. The villages were fortified. They were square, surrounded by a high wall with one heavy gate, and with a tower at one or all four corners. The houses or huts were arranged inside in a row against the wall, and being flat roofed and the outer wall loop-holed there was at once a "banquette" ready for use in case the village should be attacked.

The mountains and valleys of the Khyber range and of the other Indian frontier mountains are inhabited by these semi-independent Afghans called, collectively, Pathans or Pukhtana. There are many learned and careful men among the Government frontier officers who are at present investigating the origin and descent of the Pathan tribes.

The Khyberi Pathan whom I have described as the "guard" of the Pass is a fair type of the rest. The men are quarrelsome, are inveterate thieves, but are good fighters. Many of them enter the British service and make excellent soldiers. They are divided into a great number of different tribes, all speaking the same language, Pukhtu, or Pushtu, and bound by the same code of unwritten law, the Pukhtanwali. The neighbouring tribes, however, are jealous of one another and rarely intermarry. There is the vendetta, or law of retaliation, among them, and almost always an ancient feud exists between neighbouring villages. The women, unlike the Mahomedan townswomen, are not closely veiled; the head is covered by a blue or white cotton shawl, which, when a stranger approaches, is drawn across the lower part of the face. They wear a long dark-blue robe reaching midway

between knee and ankle, decorated on the breast and at the hem with designs in red. The feet are generally bare, and the loose trousers are drawn tight at the ankle. Their black hair hangs in two long plaits, the points being fastened with a knot of many-coloured silks.

When one considers the nature of these mountaineers—hereditary highway robbers and fighters, crack shots, agile and active, and when one observes the unlimited possibility they have among rocks, valleys, and passes of surprising a hostile army and of escaping themselves—the advantage of a "subsidy" becomes apparent.

At the distant or west extremity of the plateau, where we saw the Pathan villages, is the Landi Kotal serai. An ordinary caravansary in Afghanistan is a loopholed enclosure with one gate, and is very like the forts or villages I have described. At Landi Kotal, in addition to the native serai, is one built by the Government. It is strongly fortified, with bastion, embrasure, and banquette, and any part of the enclosure commanded by the adjoining hills is protected by a curtain or traverse.

Hot, tired, and thirsty, we four rode into the fort, and were received by the British officer in charge. The Afghan guard took up their quarters in the native serai outside. Good as the road was it had seemed an endless journey. Winding in and out in the heat we had seemed to make but little progress, and the unaccustomed weight of the turban and the dragging of the heavy revolver added considerably to our fatigue ; but the march, after all, was not more than five-and-twenty miles.

This time there was ample accommodation for us, and after an excellent dinner, the last I had in British territory for many a long month, we turned in.

After Landi Kotal, the Khyber narrows up. We wound in and out round the fissures and water channels in the face of the mountain, and climbed up and down as before; but presently the guard unslung their carbines and closed in round us. It was the Shenwari country we were now traversing, and these Pathans, even by the Amîr's soldiers, are considered dangerous; for what says the proverb, "A snake, a Shenwari, and a scorpion, have never a heart to tame." The Amîr had, however, partly subjugated them even then, and a tower of skulls stood on a hill outside Kabul.

Then we came to a series of small circular dusty valleys surrounded by rocky mountains. There was nothing green, and the heat was very great, it seemed to be focussed from the rocks. Further on we caught up with a caravan of travelling merchants with their camels and pack-horses.

These men belong almost entirely to a tribe of Afghans called Lohani. They come from the mountains about Ghazni. In the autumn they travel down to India with their merchandise and go about by rail and steamer to Bombay, Karachi, Burma, and other places for the purposes of trade. In the spring they go northward to Kabul, Herat, and Bokhara. Under the present Amîr they can travel in Afghanistan without much danger, but in the reigns of Shere Ali and Dost Mahomed they had practically to fight their way.

They go by the name of Povindia, from the

Persian word Parwinda, "a bale of merchandise." When I was in Turkestan I became acquainted with one of these men. He was a white-bearded old Afghan who had been, he told me, to China, Moscow, and even to Paris. He tried to sell me a small nickel-plated Smith and Wesson revolver.

We rode by the caravan of traders and reached Dakka, on the banks of the Kabul river. This is the first station belonging to the Amîr. The Colonel commanding came out to receive us, and conducted us to a tent on the bank, where we sat and drank tea. We were much interested in watching some Afghans swimming down the river buoyed up by inflated skins —"mussaks." Grasping the skin in their arms they steered with their legs, the force of the current carrying them rapidly along. Two men took a donkey across. They made a raft by lashing four or five skins to some small branches; and tying the donkey's legs together, they heaved him sideways on to the raft. Clinging to the skins they pushed off, and striking out with the legs, they were carried across in a diagonal direction. By-and-bye some men floated by on a rough raft made of logs. They were taking the wood to India for sale.

The river here, though not very deep, is dangerous, on account of the diverse currents.

In the centre, to the depth or three or four feet, the current runs rapidly down the river; deeper it either runs up the river or goes much slower than the surface water.

A few years later I was travelling past here, one hot summer, with Mr. Arthur Collins, recently geologist to the Amîr, and we determined to bathe.

Mr. Collins, who was a strong swimmer, swam out into the middle : I paddled near the bank where the current was sweeping strongly *up* stream. Mr. Collins, out in the middle, was suddenly turned head over heels and sucked under. He could not get to the surface, and, therefore, swam under water, happily in the right direction, and he came up very exhausted near the bank.

After resting, we rode on through some hot pebbly valleys, with no sign of vegetation, until we reached Bassawal, where we camped. The tents were put up, sentries posted, and the servants lit wood fires to prepare dinner. It soon became dark, for the twilight is very short. We were advised to have no light in our tent, lest the tribes near might take a shot at us ; and we dined in the dark. It was the first night I had ever spent in a tent, and to me it seemed a mad thing to go to bed under such circumstances. I remember another night I spent near here some years afterwards, but that I will speak of later.

On this occasion the night passed quietly.

The next morning they woke us before daybreak. The cook had lit a fire and prepared breakfast—fried eggs, tinned tongue, and tea. As soon as we were dressed the tents were struck, and while we were breakfasting the baggage was loaded up. We had camp chairs and a little portable iron table, but its legs became bent, and our enamelled iron plates had a way of slipping off, so that we generally used a mule trunk instead. The baggage was sent off, and we sat on the ground and smoked. Starting about an hour afterwards, we rode along through fertile

valleys with cornfields in them : here water for irrigation could be obtained. In March the corn was a foot high. Then we rode across a large plain covered with a coarse grass. It was not cultivated because of the impossibility of obtaining water. We camped further on in the Chahardeh valley, which was partly cultivated and partly covered with the coarse grass. The tents were put up near a clump of trees, where there was a well. Unfortunately, there was also the tomb of some man of importance, and other graves, near the well. The water we had from it tasted very musty and disagreeable. Next day we went through other cultivated valleys to the mountains again. The river here made a curve to the south, and the mountains came close up to the bank. The road, cut out of the face of the mountain, ran sometimes level with the bank, sometimes a hundred feet or more above it. It was much pleasanter than the Khyber Pass, for to the north (our right) there was the broad Kabul river, with cultivated fields on its northern bank, and though the scorching heat of the sun was reflected from the rocks there was a cool breeze blowing. I thought it was a wonderfully good road for native make, but I found, on enquiry, that it had been made by the British during the Afghan war.

After rounding a shoulder of the mountain, where the road was high above the river, we could see in the distance the Jelalabad Plain and the walled city of Jelalabad. However, it was a long way off, and we had to ride some hours before we reached it.

When on a journey in Afghanistan it is not usual to trot or canter ; in fact, the natives never trot.

They ride at a quick shuffling walk: the horse's near-side feet go forward together, and his off-side feet together—a camel's walk. It is an artificial pace, but very restful.

There was a shorter route which we could have taken from Bassawal, avoiding Jelalabad altogether, but it was mostly over pebbly hills and desert plains, and was exceeding hot. From Dacca we had kept fairly close to, though not actually in sight of, the Kabul river. It makes a vast difference to one's comfort in a tropical or semi-tropical country to travel through cultivated land where, if only at intervals, there is something green to be seen. Few things are more fatiguing than the glare of a desert and the reflected heat from pebbles and rocks; we, therefore, chose the longer but pleasanter route.

CHAPTER II

ARRIVAL AT KABUL

Arrival at Jelalabad. Reception by the Governor. The Palace. The Town. The Plain. Quarters in the Guest Pavilion. The friendly Khan. Tattang and the gunpowder factory. The Royal gardens at Nimla. The Suffêd Koh mountains. Arboreal distribution in Afghanistan. Gundamuk. Assassination of Cavagnari: details of the plot. The "Red bridge." Commencement of mountainous ascent to Kabul. Jigdilik. Massacre of British in 1837. Former dangers of the valley of Katasang. Enterprising peasants. Tomb in the Sei Baba valley. Burial customs. The Lataband Pass and the Iron Cage. Distant view of Kabul. The Amîr's projected road at Lataband. The approach to Kabul. The Lahore Gate.

We arrived at Jelalabad about the middle of the afternoon. The town is fortified; surrounded by a high wall, with bastions and loopholes; and is in a good state of repair. We entered one of the massive gates, rode through the bazaars to the Palace. The bazaars, like those of Kabul, are roughly roofed over to keep out the glare of the sun.

The Governor of Jelalabad received us in the Palace gardens: seats were placed in the shade: fans were waved by the page boys to keep off the flies; and a crowd of people stood around. Sweets were brought—chiefly sugared almonds—then tea and cigarettes, and bouquets of flowers.

We rested for a while, and as we smoked the Governor made the usual polite Oriental speeches. Then he invited us to see the interior of the Palace.

It is a large white building, standing in the midst of well laid out gardens, in which are many varieties of Eastern and European fruit-trees and flowers. The Palace was semi-European in its internal decoration. It was unfinished at this time. There was a large central hall with a domed roof, and smaller rooms at the side: a separate enclosure was built for the ladies of the harem: near by were kitchens, rooms for the Afghan bath, and a Guest house or pavilion in a garden of its own.

The town of Jelalabad is between ninety and a hundred miles from the Indian frontier town Peshawur, and contains, in the summer, a population of from three to four thousand inhabitants. There is one chief bazaar or street with shops. The other streets are very narrow. Though much smaller it resembles in style the city of Kabul, which I will describe presently.

The spot was chosen by Bâber Bâdshah, the Tartar king, founder of the Mogul dynasty of Afghanistan and India. He laid out some gardens here, but the town of Jelalabad was built by his grandson, Jelaluddin Shah, also called Akbar, in 1560 A.D., just about the time when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne. The place is interesting to us from the famous defence of Sir Robert Sale during the first Afghan war, when he held the town from November, 1841, to April, 1842.

The river which runs near the town is here broad and rapid, though shallow and with low banks. All along the river for miles the plain is marshy and overgrown with reeds. In the summer when the swamp is more or less dried up, one rides through

the reeds rather than keep to the glare and heat of the road. The plain of Jelalabad, nearly two thousand feet above the sea, is about twenty miles long, that is, from east to west, and four or five miles wide. Wherever it can be irrigated from the Kabul river it is delightfully fertile, but everywhere else it is hot barren desert. The climate of Jelalabad is much more tropical than that of Kabul—more resembling the climate of Central India; and in the winter the nomadic Afghans of the hills in the Kabul province pack their belongings on donkeys or bullocks, and with their whole families move down to Jelalabad, so that the winter population of the town is enormously greater than that of the summer.

Palm trees and oranges grow out in the gardens: pomegranates and grapes in great quantities; and there are many kinds of tropical as well as sub-tropical flowers. His Highness the Amîr had an idea a short time ago of establishing a tea plantation here. It is doubtful, however, whether it would be successful, for in the summer there is the dust storm and the scorching wind—the simûm.

After taking leave of the Governor we were shown into the Guest pavilion in its enclosed garden. Here arrangements had been made for us to spend the night. On the north side, where the pavilion overlooks the Kabul river, was a stone colonnade or verandah with pillars. A sentry was stationed here and also at the gate of the garden. One of the Khans had asked permission to entertain us at dinner, and with Afghan hospitality he provided also for the guard, servants, and horses. He did not dine with us, but came in afterwards for a chat. I noticed that

in spite of being a Mahomedan he did not refuse a cigarette and some whisky. This gentleman we were told had considerable power in the neighbourhood of Gundamuk, and we were advised, in case it should ever be necessary to escape from Kabul, to remember his friendliness; for though Gundamuk is a long way from Kabul, one could ride there in a day.

Next day we had a gallop through the fertile part of the valley. I had changed my mare for a steadier horse, and my mind was peaceful. Away to the south it was stony and bare, and in the distance we could see the snow-capped range of the Suffêd Koh or White Mountains. We did not go very many miles, but put up at the village of Tattang. Some of the villages are built entirely as forts, resembling those in the Khyber district. In others there is a similar but smaller fort, which is occupied by the Malek or some rich man with his immediate retainers; the other houses, flat topped and built of sun-dried bricks, are clumped irregularly together near the fort. But the windows, for safety and to ensure privacy, generally open into a walled garden or yard, so that even these have the appearance of being fortified. The villages are surrounded by orchards and fields.

At Tattang the Amîr has a gunpowder factory, and the superintendent showed us over it. The machinery is of wood, roughly made, and is worked by water power. The water is obtained from a stream rising in the Suffêd Koh mountains, and is led by broad channels to the water wheels. Along the channels, and indeed along most of the irrigation canals that one sees in the country, are planted poplars or willows; these protect the canal banks

from injury, and possibly lessen by their shade the rapid evaporation of water that takes place in a dry hot climate. The gunpowder is not for sale, and severe penalties are inflicted on those detected selling or stealing any.

The following day we left the cultivated part of the valley and rode through a stony desert and over pebbly mountains to Nimla. Contrasted with the pleasant ride through the fields of the day before, the heat and glare were most oppressive. The Nimla valley is, however, an oasis in the desert. In it there is a very beautiful garden enclosed within a high wall. It was made by Shah Jehangir about 1610 A.D., and has been repaired by the present Amîr. One can see the garden a great way off, the deep green of its cypress trees being a striking piece of colour among the blue greys and reds of the mountainous barren landscape. There is an avenue of these trees about one hundred feet wide, and between them, from one end of the garden to the other, rushes a broad stream with three cascades artificially made and enclosed within a stone embankment. The water is brought from a stream rising in the Suffêd Koh mountains, and rushes on to join the Surkhâb, a branch of the Kabul river.

At one end of the avenue is a pavilion surrounded by flowers. Here we put up for the night. Soldiers were sent off to the nearest villages to buy provisions, and our Hindustani cook, having dug a shallow hole in the ground in which to build his wood fire, placed a couple of stones on each side to support his pots, and sent us an excellent dinner of soup, roast fowl, and custard pudding.

We started off early next morning. Leaving the Nimla valley we had a rough road, often no more than a dry watercourse which led up over rocky mountains and across stony plains for many miles. As we were travelling westward, on our left hand, that is to the south, could be seen the great range of mountains called the Suffêd Koh, on the other side of which is the Kurram valley, now occupied by the British. This range forms the southern boundary of the Kabul province, and extending from the Khyber mountains had been on our left the whole way. Our route, however, had been somewhat north-west, for we had kept fairly close to although not on the banks of the Kabul river, but at Jelalabad we branched off from the river south-west, and came much closer to the Suffêd Koh.

This range, unlike the other mountains we saw, is covered with great forests of trees. In the whole country the arboreal distribution is peculiar. The forests are confined entirely to the main ranges of mountains and their immediate offshoots. The more distant prolongations are bare and rocky. I remember once in travelling from Turkestan to Kabul, everyone stopped and stared, for there on a mountain a solitary tree could be seen ; it looked most extraordinary. In the valleys there are poplars and willows, which have been planted by the peasants for use afterwards as roofing beams, and there are orchards of fruit-trees, but I never saw a forest, a wood, nor even a spinney. The species of tree on those mountains where they are to be found, varies, of course, according to the height you find them growing. For instance, high up, there are the cone-bearing trees, the various kinds of pine

and fir. Then come the yew and the hazel, the walnut and the oak. Lower down—to 3,000 feet—are wild olives, acacias, and mimosas. On the terminal ridges you find simply shrubs and herbs.

We passed Gundamuk, where in May, 1879, the "Treaty of Peace" was signed by the reigning Amîr Yakoub and by Sir Louis Cavagnari. Four months later, in September, Cavagnari, while British Resident in Kabul, was assassinated with the connivance of the same Amîr. I heard the whole plot of the assassination when I was in Kabul.

The story was this. Cavagnari had been holding Durbars, giving judgment in cases of dispute brought to him by the natives, and had been distributing money freely, till the Sirdars, coming to Amîr Yakoub, said, "No longer is the Amîr King of Afghanistan, Cavagnari is King." Yakoub therefore took counsel with his Sirdars as to the best course to adopt. They said, "To-morrow the Herati regiments come for their pay—send them to Cavagnari." It was crafty advice—they knew the hot fiery nature of the Heratis. The following day, when the troops appeared, unarmed, as is the custom on these occasions, Amîr Yakoub sent word, "Go to Cavagnari—he is your King." Off rushed the soldiers tumultuously, knowing the Englishman had been lavish with money. The Sikh sentry at the Residency Gate, seeing a great crowd rushing to the Bala Hissar, challenged them. The excited shouts of the crowd being no answer, he fired. At once their peaceable though noisy excitement changed to anger, and they retaliated with a shower of stones. The Residency guard were called out, some of the Afghans rushed back for their rifles,

and soon all were furiously fighting, though no one but Yakoub and his Sirdars knew why. Messages were sent to Amîr Yakoub, and the answer he returned was, "If God will, I am making preparations." The end was the massacre of the British Envoy and all with him.

About ten miles beyond Gundamuk was Surkh pul, or "The Red Bridge." This is an ancient brick bridge built over the river Surkâb, which runs into the Kabul river near Jelalabad. The bridge is built high up at a wild looking gorge between precipitous red mountains, and the river comes roaring out into the valley. The water of the river is reddish or dark-brown, from the colour of the mud in suspension ; however, the Afghans said it was good water, and while we sat in the shade of a fakir's hut there, the servants boiled some of the water and gave us tea. Then we crossed the bridge and rode on again. From here, almost to the Kabul valley, the road is through a very wild and desolate mountainous region ; you gradually rise higher and higher, to nearly 8,000 feet, but just before you reach Kabul, descend some 2,000 feet, the valley of Kabul being 6,000 feet above the sea. It is, of course, a very great deal colder in this region than in Jelalabad ; in fact, while the harvest is being reaped in Jelalabad, the corn at Gundamuk, only twenty-five miles further on, is but an inch or two above the ground. It would, perhaps, be more accurate to say that the ascent commences at Nimla. We rode some miles between two ranges of hills—the long narrow valley being cut across by spurs from the mountains ; then climbed a very long steep ascent, with precipitous walls of rock

on either side, and descended a narrow winding gorge which appeared to have been once the bed of a river. On either side of this gorge there was brushwood growing, some stunted holly trees, and what looked like twisted boxwood trees. Then we climbed the mountain, on the top of which is the Jigdilik serai. This is 6,200 feet high, and the scenery from the serai is the abomination of desolation—range after range of barren mountains. It felt bitterly cold up there after the heat we had been through.

They found us a room over the gateway of the serai, lit a blazing wood fire, and we stayed there till the next day. In the first Afghan war in 1837, during the winter retreat of the British army, of the 5,000 soldiers and 11,000 camp followers who left Kabul, only 300 reached Jigdilik, and of these only one, Dr. Brydon, reached Jelalabad, the others were shot down by the Afghans, or died of cold and exposure.

The village of Jigdilik is not on the hill where the serai is situated, but in the valley at the foot. Here three gorges meet. One was the road by which the ill-fated army came in their retreat from Kabul through the Khurd Kabul Pass. We took another road to the north-west. We climbed up and down over steep mountains and through narrow defiles hemmed in by bare rocks. In the valleys it was rare to see anything but stones, rocks, and pebbles. There was one valley at Katasung where there was a little stream with grass growing by it. This valley, a short time ago, was very dangerous to travel through on account of the highway robberies and murders of a tribe living near. It is safer now, for the Amîr has killed some of them, imprisoned others, and dispersed the rest,

We camped at Sei Baba, a narrow valley of pebbles, with a small stream trickling through it. An enterprising peasant, finding water there, had picked all the pebbles off a narrow strip of ground, piled them in a ring round his field, led the water by a trench to it, and had planted some corn. He, however, was nowhere to be seen, nor was there any house or hut there.

We occasionally came across these patches among the mountains wherever there was a trickle of water to be obtained. Sometimes they were more extensive than this one, and if made on the slope of the mountain, the ground was carefully dug and built up into terraces, so that irrigation was possible. In the middle of the Sei Baba valley was a tomb with a low wall all round it, and a solitary tree was growing by. On the tomb were placed two or three pairs of horns of the wild goat. This is done as a mark of great respect. Every passer by, too, throws a stone on a heap by the grave, and strokes his beard while he mutters a prayer. The heap of stones, or "tsalai," is supposed to be piled only over the graves of holy men or martyrs; but they are heaped over any grave that happens to be apart from others, and by the wayside. The peasants, not knowing, assume it is the grave of a holy man. The custom is said by some to originate by imitation from an act of Mahomed, in which the form but not the spirit of the ceremony has been retained; for Mahomed, fleeing for refuge to Mecca from Medina, threw stones at the city and cursed it. By others, these heaps of stones are supposed to be representative of the Buddhist funeral pillars, the custom having

remained extant since the days when Buddhism was the dominant religion of the people inhabiting this country. The latter seems the more likely explanation.

By the side of some of these tombs a small shrine, "ziyârat," is built. If the tomb is that of a known holy man, the passer by, in addition to adding a stone and saying his prayer, calls upon the name of the saint, and tears a small piece of rag off his garment, which he hangs on the nearest bush or tree. The shred is to remind the holy man that the wearer has prayed him to intercede on his behalf with the prophet Mahomed. On the grave, too, is generally planted a pole with an open hand, cut out of zinc or tin, fixed on the top. If the deceased has fallen in battle a red rag is fixed on the pole as well. What the open hand pointing to the sky represents I never heard.

When we arrived at Sei Baba we found that a party of peasants on the tramp had halted there—one of their number died just as we arrived. Seeing that we had a cavalcade of horsemen and much baggage, and there being no village nearer than seven or eight miles, they came to us to beg a little calico for a winding sheet. It struck me that ten yards, the amount they asked for, was rather much for that purpose. Possibly they thought the living men required it quite as much as the dead man.

Next day we had a high and stony range of mountains to climb—the Lataband Pass, nearly eight thousand feet above the sea. This part of the journey between Lataband and Chinár, with the winding rocky road curving high up round the spurs or plunging into narrow ravines, always seems to me the wildest

and most weird of all. The mountains are so huge and rocky, the ravines so precipitous, and the silence so appalling. A few years ago the Pass was dangerous not only in itself—the road in one place runs on a ledge of rock overhanging a seemingly bottomless precipice—but it was infested with Afghan highway robbers. Being comparatively near the capital this was particularly exasperating to the Amîr. Finding ordinary punishments of no avail he determined to make an example of the next man apprehended. As we were riding along we could see fixed on one of the highest peaks something that looked in the distance like a flagstaff. The road winding on we drew nearer, and saw it was not a flag, it was too globular, and it did not move in the wind. When we got right under the peak we saw it was a great iron cage fixed on the top of a mast. The robber had been made an example of. There was nothing left in the cage but his bones. I never heard of there being any more highway robbery or murder near here.

From this Pass you get the first view of Kabul. In the distance it seems a beautiful place, and after the long desolate march the sight of it lying in the green Kabul valley is delightful. We reached the foot of the mountains, rode some miles along a stony and barren plain till we reached a village called Butkhak, where we camped. The next day the cultivated part of the Kabul valley lay before us. First were the fields surrounding Butkhak, then we crossed a small dilapidated brick bridge over the Logar river, which runs north to join the Kabul river. We had quite lost sight of our old friend the Kabul river since we left Jelalabad : he was away somewhere

to the north of us, cutting a path for himself among the mountains. The Amîr has spent several thousands of pounds—or rather lacs of rupees—in trying to make a road in the course of the river from Kabul to Jelalabad, but it was found quite impracticable among the mountains in the Lataband and Chinâr district. The object of course was to avoid the climb over the Lataband Pass. I have never been the route through the Khurd Kabul Pass to Jigdilik, but I have heard that the road is not very good.

After crossing the Logar bridge we mounted a range of low pebbly hills, which run irregularly east across the valley, cutting it in two. From the elevated ground we could see on our left a large reed grown marsh surrounded by meadow land, which ran right up to the foot of the mountains, forming the south boundary of the valley. We were much nearer to the southern than to the northern limit. The mountains curved round in front of us and we could see the gap or gorge between the Asmai and Shere Derwaza mountains. From this the Kabul river emerged and took its course in a north-easterly direction across the valley.

On the south bank of the river near the gorge and at the foot of the Shere Derwaza lay the city. Jutting out north-east from the Shere Derwaza into the valley, about a mile south of the gorge, was the spur of the Balar Hissar, and the city seemed, as it were, to be tucked into the corner between the Shere Derwaza, its Bala Hissar spur, and the Asmai mountain. On our right, about a mile and a half north of the city, was the Sherpur cantonment or

fortification, backed by two low hill—the Bemaru heights.

We descended the elevated ground, from which we had a bird's-eye view of the valley, and found ourselves riding along excellent roads fringed with poplar trees. The cultivated fields separated by irrigation channels lay to the left of us. On the right were the pebbly hills we had crossed lower down, continued irregularly west. On the last hill nearest the town, "Siah Sang," was a strong fort, built by the British when Lord Roberts was in Kabul. It is called Fort Roberts.

We rode along the avenues of poplar and plane trees right up to the Bala Hissar spur. In the time of the Amîr Shere Ali, on the high ground of the spur stood the royal residence and the fort, and when Yakoub was Amîr this was the Residency where Cavagnari lived. It is now almost all in ruins or demolished. The gateway stands, and a part of the old palace. This is used as a prison for women, political prisoners, Hazaras, and others. The wall and the moat exist, and inside, some rough barracks have been built for a few troops. The native fort on the higher ground of the Bala Hissar seems to be in good repair. I have never been inside. It is used as a magazine for powder.

We passed the Bala Hissar, leaving it on our left, and the road led through a plantation of willows extending from the Bala Hissar some distance north, skirting the east suburb of the city. The willows in the plantation were arranged in rows about ten yards apart with a water trench or ditch under each row of trees, and the shaded space between was green

with grass—an unusual sight in Afghanistan. The trees were planted by Amîr Shere Ali, whose idea was to camp his soldiers here in the summer without tents. The willow branches are used now to make charcoal for gunpowder.

We entered the gate of the city called the Lahore Gate. It was rather dilapidated, but looked as though it might once have been strong. There were heavy wooden doors studded with iron, and large loopholes in the upper brickwork of the gate which were guarded by brick hoods open below, a species of machicoulis gallery. Possibly the loopholes were once used for the purpose of pouring boiling water on the heads of an attacking enemy.

CHAPTER III

THE RECEPTION

Position of Kabul. Its defences. Amîr's opinion of the Founders of his Capital. Entry into Kabul. Aspect of the Townsmen. Arrival at the Arm Foundry. Visit of the Afghan Official. His appearance. Absence of Amîr. To be received at the Palace by the Princes. The approach to the Palace. The Amîr's Pavilion. Page boys. The Princes Habibullah and Nasrullah. The Reception. Internal arrangement of Pavilion. The earthquake. Abrupt ending of the Reception. Other buildings in the Palace.

The city of Kabul, 5,780 feet above the sea, lies then at the foot of the bare and rocky mountains forming the west boundary of the Kabul valley, just at the triangular gorge made by the Kabul river. Through this gorge runs the high road to Turkestan and Ghuzni. An ancient brick wall, high, though somewhat ruined, with towers at intervals, leads up on each side of the gorge to the summit of the Asmai and Shere Derwaza mountains, along the latter to the Bala Hissar spur, where it joins the fort. From the Asmai a line of hills extends west to the Paghman range. Formerly the wall was taken across the gorge, bridging the Kabul river. Remains of it are to be seen on a small island in the middle. The city, therefore, was well protected on the western side—the side of danger from invasion of the Tartars: it is comparatively unprotected on the east, except by

the Bala Hissar fort; for in those days little danger of invasion was apprehended from India.

The city extends a mile and a-half from east to west, and one mile from north to south. Hemmed in as it is by the mountains, there is no way of extending it, except in a northerly direction towards the Sherpur cantonment. It is here midway between the city and Sherpur on the north side of the river that the Amîr has built his palace.

His Highness speaks derisively of the founders of his capital, "Dewanas," he calls them, "fools, to build a city of mud huts cramped into a corner among the mountains." One of his ambitions has been to build a new Kabul in the fertile Chahardeh valley to the west of the Shere Derwaza and Asmai mountains, between them and the Paghman hills. Amîr Shere Ali had also the intention of building a new Kabul, and "Shere pur," the "City of Shere Ali," was begun. However, he got no further than three sides of the wall round it.

The desire to build a new Kabul is not surprising when one has seen the present city. The first thing that strikes you on entering it is the general look of dilapidation and dirtiness. Closer acquaintance shows you how inexpressibly unclean and unhealthy an ancient Oriental city can become.

We rode through the narrow badly-paved streets, and through the bazaars, which were crowded with turbanned Afghans and Hindus robed in bright colours. They moved out of the way of our rather large cavalcade, but very few showed any appearance of curiosity; and we rode on to the garden or orchard in the gorge between the Shere Derwaza and Asmai

mountains, where, by the side of the Kabul river, the Amîr's European Arm Foundry has been established. This is protected on one side by the river, on the three other sides by high walls.

The entrance was through a large double wooden gate, where some soldiers were on guard. Inside there were built along the walls a series of rooms where tin workers, brass workers, and others practised their handicraft. In one of the larger of these rooms Mr. Pyne and myself were located, and an adjoining one was prepared for the two English engineers, Messrs. Stewart and Myddleton, who had accompanied us.

In the centre of the ground three or four large buildings were in course of erection. These had been commenced by Mr. Pyne during his first short visit to Kabul. The walls were nearly completed. To finish them were the corrugated iron roofs which Mr. Pyne had brought out from England, and the machinery, some of which was lying around packed in cases in two hundredweight pieces : the rest arrived on strings of camels a few days or weeks after we did.

In our room we found a large table loaded with sweets, cakes, kaimaghchai, or cream and tea, and various other eatables. We set to, but were presently visited and salaamed by some score or so of Hindustani mistris, whom Mr. Pyne had engaged and sent on from India. There was a very fair carpet on the earth-beaten floor. Our beds, bedding, and chairs we had brought with us. A soldier was posted on guard at our door and another on the roof.

In the space inside the enclosure unoccupied by buildings, there grew a great many mulberry trees,

and outside the walls were large beds of flowers, vines trailed over upright poles, and a fountain. This plot of ground had once been the garden of a wealthy Afghan gentleman.

On the day after our arrival in Kabul it rained hard, but on the following day we received a ceremonial visit from Jan Mahomed Khan, the treasury officer, who was accompanied by a large retinue of servants. This gentleman was of medium height and slightly built. He had a rather dark skin, but a very pleasant face, and was charming in his manner. His costume was brilliant. It consisted of a black astrakhan hat of the globular Russian shape, a purple velvet tunic embroidered with gold, a belt and sword, both highly ornamented with beaten gold, trousers and patent leather boots. The sword was not of the European shape. It was made with a slight curve, had no hand guard, and slipped almost entirely into the scabbard. Mr. Pyne was acquainted with this gentleman, having met him during his first visit to Kabul. I, therefore, was introduced. After the usual compliments and polite speeches, it was intimated to us that Prince Habibullah, the eldest son of the Amîr, would receive us at the Palace that day.

We learnt that His Highness the Amîr himself was away in Turkestan, where he had been fighting his rebellious cousin Ishak.

After Jan Mahomed Khan had politely asked permission to depart, we got ready to go to the Palace. Our horses were brought to the door, and we rode, accompanied by our guard and an interpreter, to the Erg Palace. This Palace is situated outside the town, about midway between it and the Sherpur canton-

ment. We rode from the workshops some little distance along the Kabul river, then skirted the Government buildings which are built on the south and east sides of the Palace gardens, and arrived at the east entrance, a big arched gateway in which, however, there were no gates. Here we left our horses. Entering the gateway we walked across the gardens, the guard unceremoniously clearing out of our way the clerks, pages, and petitioners who were walking along the paths. We saw in front of us the ramparts, moat, and bridges of the Palace. The flame-shaped battlements of the walls, and the decorated gateway set in a semicircular recess flanked by bastions, had a quaint Oriental appearance.

On the wall over the gateway was a small cupola sheltering what appeared to be a telescope, but may have been a machine gun. From this tower issues at sunrise and sunset the wild native music of drums and horns, which is the invariable "Salaam i subh" and "Salaam i shām" of Oriental kings. Many a morning in after years was I woke up at daybreak by the weird monotonous howl of the horns and the distant rattle of the drums.

We crossed the bridge in front of us and entered the decorated gateway, the wooden gates of which—massive and studded with iron—were open. Inside was the guard-room, large and high, with passages leading off from it, and the soldiers of the guard were grouped idly about.

The sentry on duty with fixed bayonet was lounging in a wooden shelter near the gates. He jumped up as we entered. We walked across the guard-room, out into the open, and found ourselves in

another garden. On either side of the path were grass lawns and trees. The paths were fenced off by thin iron railings. All around the gardens were buildings symmetrically arranged : two stories high on each side of the gateway, and one story elsewhere. We walked along the centre path, till we came to a long high wall, with loopholes extending across the garden, and evidently concealing other buildings ; turned to the left till we came to a small heavy wooden door studded with iron, and with the posts and jambs somewhat elaborately carved. There was no porch, but fixed in front of the doorway, about six feet from it, was a high heavy wooden screen. The object of this screen I could not see, unless it were to obstruct the view when the door was opened. Near the door was a wooden bench for the use of those who were waiting. Between the door and the screen we found an officer in uniform, armed with a sabre, and several soldiers in uniform, all armed with Martini-Henry carbines and sword-bayonets. We waited a few minutes while the officer went in to report our arrival.

We were admitted, and I saw, standing in the middle of a flower garden, the Amîr's pavilion. There were roses, wallflowers, stocks, and other sweet-smelling flowers in the garden, and the walks between the flower-beds were paved with marble. Directly opposite was the entrance to the pavilion, and it struck me at once why the heavy screen had been erected outside, opposite the gate of entry to the garden ; for the door of the pavilion being open it was possible to see into the interior, and if the door into the garden were also opened it would be

possible, without the screen, for a man in a distant part of the outer gardens to fire a rifle straight up to the royal couch. On either side of the steps leading up to the entrance of the pavilion reposed a marble lion. These I found had not been carved in Afghanistan, but were imported from India. The pavilion struck one as an extraordinary piece of architecture in an ornate style.

We went up the steps into the entry, where there were several page boys waiting. They were not dressed as Orientals, but had on astrakhan hats, velvet tunics of different colours, embroidered with gold, trousers, and English boots. The lobby led into a circular or octagonal hall, with a high domed roof, and, entering it, we found ourselves in the presence of the Prince.

His Highness was seated in an arm-chair, his brother, Sirdar Nasrullah Khan, on his left, and several officers in a semicircle on his right. The Prince Habibullah Khan is a broadly built somewhat stout man, and appeared to be about twenty years of age. He is fair for an Oriental, is shaven except for a slight moustache, has handsome features, and a very pleasant smile. Sirdar Nasrullah Khan, who seemed about seventeen, is of a different type. He is less broadly built than his elder brother, and his features are more aquiline. Neither of the Princes is tall. Habibullah Khan bears a strong resemblance to the Amîr, though he has a smaller frame and a much milder expression than his Royal Father. The Prince stammers slightly in his speech, and His Highness, the Amîr, told me this affection first appeared after an attempt had been made to

poison the Prince when he was quite a child. The Princes and the officers were dressed in European military uniforms, with astrakhan hats, and though this was an Oriental court no one was seated on the ground.

Contrary to Oriental etiquette we took off the turbans which we had been wearing, for it seemed better to act according to Western ideas of courtesy than to attempt to imitate the customs of Orientals, of which we then knew very little. We bowed as we were introduced, and the Prince, without rising, shook hands with us, politely enquiring if we were well, and expressed a hope that we were not fatigued by the journey to Kabul.

Chairs were placed for us in front of the Prince, at some little distance, and to his left. Tea and cigarettes were brought. The Prince spoke to us for some time, chiefly about the machinery and workshops. He spoke in Persian, the interpreter translating.

There were four alcoves or rooms leading off from the central hall of the pavilion, each about twelve feet square : one constituted the lobby : in the opposite alcove, I learnt afterwards, the Amîr's couch is usually placed, and one led off from each side. The four rooms leading from the central hall were not separated by doors, and over each was a corresponding room upstairs, also looking into the central hall, but protected by a wooden railing. The rooms were lighted by windows opening into the garden ; and the central hall by borrowed light from the rooms. The hall, though high and domed, was not more than about eighteen feet across, and

against the four short walls that intervened between the rooms, were placed respectively a piano with a gold embroidered velvet cover; a carved wood cabinet; a marble table covered with brass candlesticks and ornamental lamps of different patterns, from England and Russia; and a dark carved wood escritoire with writing materials on it.

As I sat facing the Prince with my back to the entry, I saw hanging on the walls opposite me two framed chromo-lithographs—one representing the English House of Commons and the other the House of Lords. A year or two afterwards I became much better acquainted with this pavilion, for I had to live there while I was attending His Highness during a severe illness. The Amîr told me he designed it himself; I fancy he got the idea from one of the churches in Tashkend, of which I have seen a picture. It was small, he said, but was built as an experiment; he had endeavoured to make it earthquake proof by bracing it with iron bands. It cost him a great sum of money.

The Prince lit a cigarette, and just as he began smoking we heard a most curious noise. The lamps and vases rattled violently, and I saw the Prince's face change. Pyne turned to me and said, "An earthquake!" The rattling and shaking increased, the doors swung open, and our chairs heaved. The Prince sat a moment while the noise and shaking grew more and more severe, then suddenly he rose and walked rapidly out into the gardens. The whole court, and we with them, followed hurriedly. All thought the Palace would fall. With one exception it was the most severe earthquake I ever experienced.

The shock lasted four minutes, and travelled from east to west. We returned again to the pavilion for a short time, but presently were allowed to retire, so that the reception ended somewhat abruptly.

As we were coming out I found there were two other enclosures in the fort beside that containing the Amîr's pavilion. Next to the Amîr's garden was the large enclosure of the Harem serai. It is not etiquette to walk past the door of this if you can get to your destination any other way. I had to enter this enclosure once, but that I will speak of later.

Next to the Harem serai was a quadrangle containing the official quarters of the Princes. Each Prince has also an establishment in the city, where are his servants, and horses, and his harem. Besides these enclosures there is the Treasury, the Amîr's private Stores containing valuables of all kinds, silks and diamonds, carpets, and wines: a row of cook houses or kitchens: quarters for the court officials and pages; and barracks for the garrison. The fort, though seemingly strong, and no doubt useful in case of a sudden riot, is completely under the control of the fort on the summit of the Asmai mountains.

CHAPTER IV

AFGHAN HOSPITALS

The first attendance at an Afghan Hospital. Its arrangement. The drugs and instruments. The Patients. An Interpreter presents himself. Dispensers. Marvellous recovery of the Page boy. Its effect. Buildings near the Hospital. The Durbar Hall and Guest House. The Sherpûr Military Hospital. Lord Roberts and the Sherpûr Cantonment. Adventure with an Afghan Soldier. Arrangement of the In-patient Hospital. Diet of Patients. Attendance of Hakims. Storekeepers and their ways.

THE next day Mr. Pyne set to work to get the pieces of machinery removed from their cases and put together. Followed by a sergeant and a couple of soldiers of the guard he bustled about vigorously, issuing rapid orders in a mixture of English and broken Hindustani, and Persian, which compound language his workmen soon learnt to understand.

I had received no orders as to attending patients, but hearing from Pyne that there was a City Hospital I rode off with my guard to see what it was like. I found the Hospital was situated in the row of Government buildings erected outside the Erg Palace on the wide poplar-fringed road running between the city and the Sherpûr cantonment, which was made by the British and called by them "The Old Mall." These buildings skirt the gardens outside the Erg Palace on the south and east. Like most of the buildings put up under the direction of the Amîr, they

are better built than most of the other houses in Kabul. Though only of one story they are very lofty, with thick walls, and have glazed windows. The buildings do not open into the street but into the gardens, access to which is obtained by the big gateway on the east side, where we left our horses when we visited the Prince, and by a similar gateway on the south.

In the storeroom of the Dispensary I found on the shelves of glazed cupboards a great many cases of old-fashioned surgical instruments, some of which were marked "Hon. East India Co.," and on other shelves a large collection of European drugs in their bottles, jars, and parcels. The name of each drug was written in Persian as well as in English characters. These had been ordered from time to time by certain Hindustani Hospital assistants who were in the service of the Amîr, and who had had charge of the Out-patient Hospital and the European drug stores. The Hospital assistants had not used any great amount of judgment in their orders, nor had they considered expense in the least. I found great quantities of patent medicines warranted to cure every disease under the sun; and of the newer and more expensive drugs of which so much is expected and so little is known. The old tried friends of the Medical Profession, whose cost is reasonable and whose action is known, such as quinine, ipecacuanha, carbonate of ammonia, Epsom salts, were conspicuous by their absence. I enquired what plan had been adopted by the Hindustanis when they were making out their orders, and learnt that they got hold of the price list of some enterprising vendor which had

found its way to Kabul through India, and ticking off any drugs or patent mixtures that seemed to promise an easy road to success in treatment, they ordered great quantities of these, regardless of cost and before they had tested them.

The stores were in charge of a Hindustani, who had obtained a medical qualification in Lahore, and who had been in the British service. He showed me a medal, and was reported to be in receipt of a small pension from the Government, though how he received it while in Kabul I never heard.

I reached the Hospital about nine o'clock in the morning, and found myself confronted by some eighty sick Afghans who had heard of the arrival of a "Feringhi doctor," and were all eager to be cured by him. In the time when Lord Roberts occupied Kabul the regimental surgeons had done good work among the Afghans.

A guard, with fixed bayonet, stood at the door to keep off the crush ; he did not use the bayonet, but he used a stick that he had with some vigour.

Every patient who had a weapon, and most Afghans wear one of some kind, was disarmed before he entered the room. I had no interpreter, and had been advised by Mr. Pyne not to learn Persian ; so that when the first patient was admitted I was in somewhat of a difficulty. I had seen in a Persian grammar that the word "Dard" meant *pain*, so that when the first man came up I said, "Dard?" putting a note of interrogation after it. The patient looked blankly at me. I thought he must be intellectually very dull, and I repeated my word, but with no better result. Not knowing

quite what to say next, I examined him with the stethoscope.

He was greatly astonished, and shrank back somewhat suspiciously when I placed it against his chest. However, when he found no evil resulted, he allowed me to proceed. I could not find anything the matter with him, and was again at a standstill.

This seemed very unsatisfactory; when to my great relief, a tall young man, in a turban and a brown frock-shaped coat, stepped forward and addressed me in imperfect English. I found he was an Armenian Christian who had been educated in a Missionary boarding school in India, but he had been so long in Kabul that he had nearly forgotten English. He afterwards became my interpreter, and grew very fluent, but at first I had to learn *his* English before I could understand him; it was quite different from anybody else's. However—about the patient—I said, "Ask this man if he has any pain." And then I found that my word "Dard" ought to have been pronounced more like "Dŭrrŭd." I tried "Dŭrrŭd" on them afterwards, but either they didn't expect me to know Persian, or else there ought to have been some context to my word, for they looked just as blankly at me as when I said "Dard." The ordinary Afghan is a very slow-witted person. I found the patient had no pain, and I said,

"Tell him to put out his tongue."

The patient appeared surprised, and looked somewhat doubtfully at me. I suppose he thought I was jesting in making such a request. However, he put out his tongue: it was quite healthy. I said,

"There is nothing the matter with him;" but the Armenian said,

"Sir, a little you stop—*I* find out." He said something in Persian, and the man nodded. What words the Armenian used to enable me to understand what was wrong I do not remember, but I found out eventually that the patient wanted a tonic, for all he suffered from was an inability to manage his many wives. I said, "Tell the man his complaint does not exist in my country; I have no medicines for it."

There were, I should think, a dozen who came the first day for the same reason. Of other diseases, malarial fevers, eye cases, venereal diseases, coughs, and dyspepsia were the commonest. I was not able to finish attending to all the patients in the morning, and returned in the afternoon, finding them still waiting. As the days went by, the number of patients increased to such an extent, that it finally became no small matter to attend to them all, and do my own dispensing. There were Hindustani dispensers, but I was not quite prepared to trust them, till I knew them better.

One day a lad, one of the Court pages, was brought: he was suffering from jaundice. I put the suitable medicine in a bottle, placed it on the table, then turned to examine another patient, mixed his medicine, and put the bottle by the side of the first one. I went on till I had about a dozen bottles ready, then I ordered them to be filled with water, and gave them out. The patients took their medicine and progressed satisfactorily: the Page boy, in particular, rapidly improved. I was naturally pleased, and said

so to the Armenian. I thought he looked rather strangely at me, and he said—

"Truly God works for the Sir!"

I wondered rather that he should be so impressive; but not for some months after did I know why he was so. Then he told me. It seemed that after I had mixed the Page boy's medicine and turned away to the second patient, one of the dispensers seeing the bottle on the table ready, as he thought, for use and not quite clean, washed it out and replaced it. It was then filled with water, and the boy rapidly became well. The dispenser had not dared to say what he had done, lest I should be angry. There was great wonder and awe at the hospital over that case, and my reputation as a healer of the sick spread rapidly.

"If the Feringhi," they said, "gives a pinch of dust (jalap powder) or only water, the sick became well!"

In the Palace gardens outside the moat, and about a hundred yards from the out-patient hospital, I saw a large white building with pillared verandah and corrugated iron roof. This was the "Salaam Khana" or Hall of Audience. It is a long high hall, with twelve lofty windows on each side draped with English curtains: two rows of white pillars support the ceiling, which is decorated in colours with stencilled and lacquered plates of thin brass. The floor is covered with English carpets, and when, as is frequently the case, a dinner is given by His Highness to the chief officers of his army, long tables occupy the aisles, and each guest is accommodated with a cane-seated wooden arm-chair. During a

banquet or festival, the hall is lit in the evening by two big "arc" electric lamps, the dynamo of which is worked by a portable engine, which is brought from the workshop for the occasion. The building lies east and west, and is entered at the eastern extremity by a big doorway and portico. The western extremity is entered through a large vestibule with portico and steps. Here the building is carried up another story, and this part of the Salaam Khana constitutes the Amîr's Guest House.

On the ground floor are the great hall, the vestibule or entrance hall which opens into the Palace gardens, and three smaller rooms. A stone staircase with wooden balustrades leads to the upper floor. Here there is in the centre a large pavilion, the Guest House, lighted by many large double windows, which open on to the covered balcony or terrace on the roof of the lower rooms. The Amîr and, sometimes, Prince Habibullah, are accustomed to spend a month or two in this house, living in the upper pavilion, or in one of the lower rooms.

A few days after my first appearance at the dispensary, I heard there was a military "In-patient" hospital situated in the Sherpûr cantonment, which lies to the north of the town about a mile and a half away.

I determined to visit it, and one afternoon, after finishing at the City Dispensary, we started along the Old Mall which leads from the town, past the Erg Palace to the cantonment.

We passed first the Salaam Khana, and then, further on, at the extremity of the Palace gardens, I saw a small monument about twenty feet high. It

was square at the base and carried upward like the spire of a church. On the square pediment was an inscription in Persian. This monument I learnt was erected by His Highness to the memory of those soldiers who fell in the last war against the British.

On the other side of the Old Mall, commencing opposite the Palace and extending as far as the monument, is a row of one storied buildings. These open not on to the road, but on the other side into vegetable gardens and fields at the back. This row of buildings, which turns a corner opposite the monument and extends down a road running east to the Kabul river, the Amîr has built as a barrack for the soldiers of his body guard. About four feet from the doors of this row of buildings is a narrow stream of running water, artificially made and used, after the Afghan custom, both for ablutionary and for drinking purposes, as well as for the irrigation of the vegetable gardens.

Proceeding on our way we approached the lofty battlemented walls surrounding the Sherpûr cantonment. This oblong enclosure, which lies nearly east and west a mile and a half due north of the city, is a mile and a half along its front, nearly three-quarters of a mile along either end, and backs upon two low hills about three hundred feet high, the Bemaru heights, at the east base of which, within the enclosure, lies the Bemaru village. The hills protect the north side : the other three sides are protected by the high walls, which are complete except for half the length of the east extremity just by the Bemaru village.

It was this cantonment, it will be remembered, that was held by the British at the time when Lord Roberts occupied Kabul during the second Afghan war.

The Afghans had planned a sudden night attack in which their whole force was to move suddenly at a given signal upon the cantonment. As Lord Roberts' force was exceedingly small, considering the great extent of the cantonment, it was thought by the Afghans that an easy victory would result. The signal was to be the sudden lighting of a beacon on the Asmai mountain. But there are never wanting those among the Afghans who, for a sufficient bribe, will reveal anything, and the British were ready when the attack came. The rush was met by a continuous and deadly fire, and after strenuous but vain efforts to gain an entry, the Afghans retired, leaving great numbers of their comrades dead on the field.

The gate we entered was protected outside by a semicircular curtain. Built along the inner side of the wall were buildings one story high, with a massive pillared colonnade or verandah and flat roof. There were wood-faced, clay-beaten steps at intervals leading to the roof, so that it was possible for troops defending the cantonment to take their stand on the roof and fire through the loopholes.

Just inside the gate was a bazaar of small shops, where fruit, vegetables, and bread were for sale ; and soldiers in every style of dress, Turkoman, Kabuli, Hazara, were grouped about. Some were seated on the ground playing cards, some smoking the chillim or hubble-bubble, others digging in little vegetable or flower-gardens. These were created with

great pains around irregularly arranged huts which formed the north side of the street leading along by the colonnade. These huts and the rooms under the colonnade were used as barracks. The soldiers seemed to stare with more curiosity than the townspeople had shown, and as we rode along towards the hospital one suddenly stepped forward and seized my bridle. I thought it was a piece of insolence, and raised my riding-whip to cut him across the face, when it occurred to me that perhaps it would be as well not to risk a close acquaintance with the ready knife of an incensed Afghan. My guard seized the man and hustled him out of the way with many loud words, to which he replied vigorously. Not understanding Persian, and an interpreter not being with me, I could not enquire what it was all about, so I rode on. All the centre of the cantonment was a huge open gravelled space, and here troops were drilling. The words of command were in Afghani or Pushtu, not Persian, but the titles of the officers were moulded upon English titles: Sergeant was pronounced Surgeon; Captain, Kiftan; General, Jinral; and there was Brigadier and Brigadier-Jinral.

The hospital was in an enclosed garden within the cantonment, and was entered by low but heavy double gates. A series of rooms was built along the inner side of the walls of the garden in the usual Afghan style. There was no connection between the rooms except by a verandah, and there was no upper story. Each room was about eight feet by ten, and as none of them had windows, but were lighted simply by the door that opened on to the verandah, they were nearly dark.

In the garden were a few trees, and in the centre a square sunk tank for water : this, however, was empty. There was a cook-house or kitchen, with its coppers and ovens heated by charcoal, where the cook baked the bread and prepared the diets for the patients ; Pilau (rice and meat), kabob (small squares of meat skewered on a stick and grilled over charcoal), shôrbar, or broth, and shôla, which is rice boiled and moistened with broth. There were two dispensaries, one containing native drugs and one a few European drugs. There were, of course, no female nurses : each sick soldier was looked after by a comrade.

The Hakim on his daily round wrote on a slip of paper the date and the name, diet and medicine of the patient he prescribed for. This was handed to the attendant of each patient, whose duty it was to procure the medicine from the dispensary and the food from the cook-house. I never heard of an attendant eating the food intended for a patient. One hakim, the cook and dispenser lived in the hospital. The slips of paper were taken to the mirza, or clerk, who copied the daily diets on to one paper, and the medicines on another. The papers were then put away in the stores. No daily totals were taken, so that if fraud were suspected on the part of a storekeeper, dispenser, or cook, and the Amîr ordered a rendering or auditing of accounts, the matter took a year, a year and a-half, or two years before it was completed. However, as I found later, the order in Afghanistan to "render an account" is usually synonymous with "fine, imprisonment, or death."

The next morning at the out-patient hospital when the Armenian interpreter appeared, I told him of the

soldier seizing my bridle in Sherpur, and asked him to enquire what the man wanted. He seemed rather startled when I told him, and at once turned to the sergeant of the guard to enquire about it. It was nothing after all, simply the man, guessing I was the Feringhi doctor, wanted me to see a sick comrade. They apologized for him, saying he was not a Kabuli but an uncouth "hillman" who knew no better. However, an order from Prince Habibullah arrived in the afternoon that I was not to attend at Sherpur till he had communicated with his Highness the Amîr.

CHAPTER V

AFGHAN DWELLINGS

The Residential streets of Kabul. Their appearance and arrangement. The Police. Criminal Punishments. The Houses. Their internal arrangement. Precautions to ensure privacy. Manner of building for the rich and for the poor. Effect of rain and earthquake. The warming of houses in the winter. Afternoon teas. Bath-houses. The Afghan bath.

THE same day that I attended the Hospital, I received an order to visit a man of some importance, the brother of the Prince's Chief Secretary or Mirza. Although it was but a very short distance, I went on horseback, for I found it was not usual for any man of position to walk about the town. The patient was suffering from Paralysis agitans, or Shaking palsy, and was of course incurable. I was not allowed to depart until I had eaten some sweets and drank tea.

To reach his house we rode through the streets in which are the living houses of Kabul. I think the most striking peculiarity of these Residential streets is their narrowness, and the height and irregular arrangement of the almost windowless walls. Generally, they are simply narrow passages necessary to obtain access to one, or a group, of the living houses. Few of the streets, except the bazaars, can be called in any sense thoroughfares. They wind and twist about most irregularly, sometimes open to the sky, sometimes covered in by rooms belonging to the

adjoining houses, and they usually end abruptly at the closed door of a house or garden. When one or more rooms are built over the street the builder rarely trusts to the strength of the original wall: he fixes wooden uprights on each side to support the cross beams. Dirtiness and want of ventilation are conspicuous. Drainage and street scavenging are also conspicuous by their absence. At one time it was exceedingly unsafe to traverse the streets after nightfall—I mean for the Kabulis themselves. Robbery and murder were every night occurrences. It is now, however, less dangerous. There are sentries belonging to the military police posted at intervals, each having a small oil lamp at his station. After ten o'clock at night every passer-by must give the night word or be kept by the police till the morning, when he is brought before a magistrate to give a reason for his wanderings. And the Amîr now punishes the crimes of robbery and murder most severely. For robbery and theft the hand of the criminal is amputated in a rough and ready way. It is done in this manner. The local butcher is called in. He knots a rope tightly just above the wrist of the criminal, and with a short sharp knife he severs the hand at the joint, plunging the raw stump into boiling oil. Then the criminal becomes a patient and is sent to the hospital to be cured. No flap of skin has been made to cover the end of the bone, and the skin has been scalded for two inches or more by the oil, so that months go by before the stump heals by cicatrization. A priest one day—he may have been a humane Afghan—suggested to the Amîr that operations of this

and other kinds on criminals should be done by the European doctor. The Amîr negatived the suggestion with a sharp reprimand.

For murder—hanging and other forms of putting to death were found inadequate. So that now in addition to the murderer being given into the hands of the deceased's friends for them to kill as they please, such a fine is put upon his whole family—father, brothers, uncles, and cousins—that they are all ruined. Mere life is of no great value to an Afghan, and at one time if a man found it inconvenient to kill his enemy himself, he could easily get someone who for six thousand rupees would do it for him and take the risk of being hung, so long as the money was paid to his family.

Supposing you have to visit a person in the town, you are conducted on horseback along the narrow winding streets. You dismount at a door and stumble into a dark winding passage with your head bent to avoid a bang against an irregular beam, and you go slowly for fear of puddles and holes which you cannot see. You come into the open, and find yourself in a garden with flowers and trees, and a tank or pond in the middle, or in a small courtyard with simply a well. The house is built round the garden or yard, and consists of a series of rooms opening by doors into one another and with the windows all looking into the garden.

The richer men, especially those whose houses have been built within the present reign, have large and beautiful gardens full of fruit-trees and flowers, and through them ripples a stream or channel to supply the tank with fresh water. A house

so placed that a stream can be brought through the garden from some irrigation canal is of greater value than one where water can be obtained only from a well. These modern houses are better built and much more elaborate than the older ones. The windows, large and often filled with coloured glass, are made to open and shut on hinges. The floors, though rarely boarded, are of beaten earth carefully levelled. The rooms are decorated all round in the Oriental way with "takchas," or small niches having the Saracenic arch. There is a frieze just below the ceiling, and below this is a dado, with mouldings which are arranged also around the takchas and the fireplace, if one exists. The mouldings are of a hard and fine cement with which the whole wall is faced. The best cement is brown in colour, very like Portland cement, and is found at Herat. Generally the wall is whitewashed, and sometimes before the cement is dry it is sprinkled with sparkling particles of talc. The ceiling may be boarded, but more often the beams are hidden by crimson drapery stretched tightly across. In the winter a crimson curtain is hung over the door. The windows, except in the Amîr's palace, are rarely curtained.

The takchas or recesses are filled with vases, lamps, or candlesticks, and the floor is covered with beautiful Turkestan rugs or carpets. These, with the addition of a velvet-covered mattress, properly constitute the furniture of a room, for Orientals habitually sit cross-legged on the ground. Now-a-days, however, no rich Afghan townsman considers his room furnished without a chair or two; not that

he uses them much except when a distinguished foreigner calls, but it is a sign that he knows what is correct. Sometimes you even see a small table, but this is not usual. The houses of the richer men are in the suburbs. They cover large spaces of ground and are rarely more than one story high. They are not built level with the garden, but are raised some three or four steps. The roof is flat, and a staircase leads to the top. In the summer, on account of the heat, it is usual for a tent to be erected on the top of the house, and for the owner to sleep there. There are apartments which are devoted solely to the ladies of the harem, and also kitchens and quarters for the servants and slaves. The stables are, as a rule, in another enclosure. The whole house and garden, surrounded by its high wall and entered by only one gate, is absolutely private and screened entirely from any curious eye.

Generally there is a room arranged apart from the rest with its window opening outside and not into the garden. This is often a story above the others, and has a staircase of its own. It is for the reception of male visitors who are not relatives or intimate friends of the host.

The houses of the less rich, particularly those in the heart of the town where space is limited, are two, three, or even four stories high. They are built on very much the same plan, though the garden is replaced by a small cramped yard. Many of these are very old houses, and their window sashes do not hang on hinges, but consist of three shutters one above the other, sometimes beautifully carved. If the owner can afford glass the top shutter has one

small pane, the second, two, and the third, three; generally, however, there is no glass. The shutters all push up out of the way, and the window is generally wide open, for in the spring, summer, and autumn, the heat is considerable. It is only in the newest houses that you see fireplaces, and these are rarely used, not because the winter is not cold, but because wood is too expensive to burn in such an extravagant way. There is coal in the country, but it is not in use. Even if mines were worked it would be far too costly a proceeding in the absence of railways to bring the coal to town. Quite lately a little inferior coal has been brought for use in the Amîr's workshops, but there is none for sale.

In the winter people keep themselves warm by means of a charcoal brazier or sandali, which I will describe presently. In the city, the houses being crowded so close to one another, it was to me a source of wonder how the owners could prevent themselves being overlooked. I was informed that if a man standing on the top of his house could see into his neighbour's enclosure, even into the garden, he was compelled by law to build a wall or screen to cut off his view: a violation of the privacy of a man's dwelling by looking over the wall is a great offence in Afghanistan.

When a house is to be built, a trench two feet deep is dug and large stones or pieces of rock, unshaped, are packed in with a mixture of clay and chopped straw. This is the foundation. The thickness of the wall depends on the class of house and the height it is to be built. Two feet is about the thickness of the wall of a house one story high. In

the poorer houses the wall is built of lumps of clay or mud mixed with chopped straw : in the better houses, of sun-dried bricks six inches square, an inch thick, and laid on the flat : in the best, of similar bricks properly baked. The roof is supported on beams of unshaped poplar. The wood being of poor quality the beams are arranged close together, with a space of not more than two or three inches between each. The beams are covered with rush matting, or, in some houses, little pieces of wood, about four inches long and an inch wide, are placed from beam to beam close together. Over this or the matting is placed clay and chopped straw to the thickness of eight or nine inches. Upper floors are made in precisely the same way. As there is very little rain in the country, a house built in this manner will stand for years, but it is necessary to repair the roof every autumn. When a poor-class house is carried more than one story high, the upper stories, often projecting beyond the lower, are framed with wooden beams—poplar—and the interspaces filled in with sun-dried bricks, making a wall one brick thick. The builder never trusts to the lower wall alone to support a second or third story, but invariably fixes uprights of wood in the ground against the wall to support the first floor. This may be because the extra stories have been added on as the need for more space became urgent. In the older houses the walls are rarely perpendicular, but bulge and lean in all sorts of dreadful ways. If a house seems inclined to tumble over on one side, several extra props of wood are fixed under it. Sometimes an unusual amount of rain in the autumn will wash a house down, and not infrequently an earthquake

will shake one to pieces. But considering how they are built, and what they look like, it is astonishing how long they stand.

In the better class houses, built of brick, there is not so much need of the wooden uprights, though even in these you generally see them. The walls of these better houses are some of them very thick : this is the case when they are from the commencement intended to be more than one story high. The house that I lived in in Kabul, after I returned from Turkestan, was one of the better class. It was arranged in two wings at right angles to one another, and was two stories high. It was built of brick coated with mud and chopped straw. The lower walls were about four feet thick and the upper about two feet. Nevertheless, wooden uprights supported the upper floor where I lived. Below were the stables, the kitchen, and the servants' quarters. I noticed in the stable that one of the walls bulged alarmingly, so that I did not feel any too comfortable when an earthquake—a common phenomenon in Kabul—shook the house. The sensation produced by a slight earthquake is somewhat similar to that produced when you are standing on the platform of a small station and an express comes rushing through. There is not so much noise, but the shaking is very similar. A severe earthquake is very different. It commences mildly, and you think it will stop soon—but it does not : it becomes worse and worse, the beams creak, the windows and doors rattle, the house rocks, and you wonder what is coming next. If it is daytime you escape from the house ; if it is night, and in

the winter, with three feet of snow outside, you wait for further developments, hoping your house will not fall on top of you.

The houses, being built in this way with thick non-conducting walls and roof, are wonderfully cool, in spite of the intense heat of the sun in summer. They should be equally warm in the winter, but, unfortunately, the windows and doors never fit properly. There is no paint on the woodwork, for paint is far too expensive to be used in such a wholesale way, and the heat and dryness of the summer make great cracks appear. Except in the Amîr's palaces there are no latches to the doors such as we have. The doors and windows are fastened by a chain which hooks on to a staple. The windows of a room occupy nearly the whole of the wall on the garden side of the room; and as passages are rare—one room opening into another—there are two or more doors to each room. The number and variety of draughts, therefore, can be imagined; so that with the thermometer at zero, or below, it is utterly impossible to keep a room warm with a wood fire in the fire-place—even if you have a fire-place, which is unusual.

The Afghans do not attempt to keep the room warm. They keep themselves warm, however, by means of the "sandali." An iron pot or brazier is placed in the middle of the room and filled with glowing charcoal. Among poorer people simply a shallow hole is scraped in the earth of the floor, and in this the charcoal is put. A large wooden stool is placed over the charcoal and covered by a very large cotton-wool quilt, or rezai. The people

sit on the ground round the sandali, pulling the quilt up to their chin. A big postîn over the shoulders keeps the back warm, and the turban is always kept on the head. In the winter there is not much work done, and the people sit by the sandali most of the day. Supposing you make a call, you find them, masters and servants (all men, of course), sitting round the sandali chatting together or playing cards or chess. The ladies have their own sandali in the harem—you don't see them. Everyone rises as you enter, and room is politely made for you at the sandali. One of the servants goes off to prepare tea, making the water hot in the samovar. Another makes ready the chillim, or hubble-bubble. The tray is brought in with an embroidered teacloth over it, covering teapot, cups and saucers, and sugar-basin. The servant places the tray on the floor and kneels down by the side of it, folding up the cloth for a tea cosy. It is not etiquette for a servant to sit cross-legged in the presence of a visitor or a superior. In the privacy of their own homes etiquette is, however, considerably remitted. He puts two or three big lumps of sugar into the cup and pours out the tea, breaking up the sugar with a spoon. He gets up and hands you the cup and saucer with both hands. To use one hand would be a rudeness. No milk or cream is drank with the tea, except in the occasional cup of "kaimagh-chai."

You must drink two cups of this sweet tea—it is flavoured with cardamoms—and half a cup of tea without any sugar—"chai-i-talkh"—this is to correct

the sweetness. If you make two or three calls in an afternoon, you feel it is as much as you can bear. In Afghanistan you may call upon a man whenever you like, but you must not leave his house without asking permission. I told them that in my country it was different : people were not allowed to call upon us without invitation, and they could go away as soon as they pleased. The Afghans seemed to think this was very discourteous, for they are nothing if not hospitable.

All the larger houses have rooms for the Afghan bath ; there is the bath-room proper, and a small dressing-room. It is not a hot dry-air bath like the Turkish bath, but a hot moist air, so that the heat is never so great as in the Turkish bath. The walls are cemented, and the floor either cemented or paved with an inferior marble that is plentiful near Kabul. The cement is made of equal parts of wood-ashes and lime moistened and beaten together for some days. In a recess in one wall is a cistern or tank of stone or cement, with a fireplace beneath it, which is fed from the stokehole outside the bath-room. Public bath-rooms are quite an institution in Afghanistan. They are rented by a bath-man or barber, who makes what he can out of them. Some of the bath-houses belong to the Amîr. The bath is by no means an expensive luxury : the poorer people pay about a halfpenny. Richer people who engage the services of the bath-man or barber to shampoo them, pay about eighteenpence. The plan I adopted was to engage the bath-room and the shampooer for the day. It cost but a few shillings.

Having sent word a day or two beforehand, I

used to start about ten o'clock in the morning, accompanied by all my Afghan servants, bringing bath-towel, soap and comb. It is the custom in Afghanistan when the master has engaged the bath-room, for the Afghan servant to seize the opportunity of having a free bath. Hindustani servants in Kabul do not presume to accompany the Sahib on such an occasion. The outside appearance of the bath-house is not very inviting. As a rule, there is a large pool of stagnant water near by—the waste water of the bath—and you dismount in a hesitating way. When you get into the small dark unpaved entry, and slip about on the mud, the inclination is to turn round and go out again. However, having got so far, you think you may as well face it out. You find the dressing-room clean and dry, and the bath proprietor (or tenant rather) comes out to receive you. He is dressed—or undressed—ready to shampoo you, his only garment being a waist-cloth. The servants pull off your boots, and help you to get ready, and then fix a waist-cloth, which reaches the knees, very tightly round the waist, fastening it with a particular twist. The bath-man taking your hand, raises the curtain over the arched door of the bath-room, and leads you carefully in. The reason is that the floor being very smooth and wet, you are exceedingly likely, without great care, to have a dangerous fall. When you enter, the air being damp as well as hot, you feel almost suffocated.

A good class bath-room is generally octagonal, with a vaulted and groined roof, not much

decorated, but displaying a certain amount of taste in the building. The windows are arched and glazed, and very small, so that the room is rather dark. The Afghan servants quickly follow you in, attired in the same way as yourself, and though they treat you with due respect, all seem for the time, more or less, on an equality, and as they dash the water over each other, they chat and laugh quite unrestrainedly. The process of massage, or shampooing, which the bath-men thoroughly understand, is rather a long one; and it is not at all uncommon when bathing to spend a great part of the day—four or five hours—in the bath-room. For myself, I found two hours quite as much as I wanted. A cloth is folded up for a pillow, and you lie on a warm part of the marble, or cement floor. You generally see, at first with some disgust, a few large long-legged ants, running quickly about near the walls: afterwards you become indifferent, for, as the bath-man says, they are harmless, they don't sting. There are such swarms of insects of all kinds in the East, that you divide them roughly into those that sting and those that don't. The latter you take no notice of, the former you treat with more respect. The shampooer, having dashed on a little warm water, begins by stretching and kneading the skin of one arm, the rubbing being done in the direction of the blood current; the knuckles of the fingers he cracks with a sudden jerk. Then he goes to the other arm. Having treated all the limbs the same way, he places his two hands on the sides of the chest, and suddenly throws his whole weight on to them, which

stretches the skin, and compressing the ribs, drives out the air from the chest with a grunt and gasp. Then he kneads and rubs the muscles of the chest, shoulders, and body. After that he brings you into sitting posture, and fixing you with his knee, he seizes one shoulder and twists you round as far as you can go, and with a sudden jerk in the same direction he makes the back-bone crack. A similar twisting is done the other way round. He then takes a coarse flesh glove and proceeds to rasp your skin off. The more he can get off, the better pleased he is. They left me the first time with a "fox bite" on the chest, which lasted for days. On subsequent occasions I called attention to the fact that I was an Englishman and not a cast-iron Afghan. After the flesh glove, come two courses of "soaping"—how it smarts! hot water being dashed on at frequent intervals. The Afghan shoe leaving a part of the instep exposed, the skin becomes thick and coarse, and a piece of pumice stone is used to scrub the feet with. This, after all the rest, was too much for me, and I rebelled, excusing myself by explaining that my life was of value to the Amîr on account of the number of sick poor in the city.

Finally you stand up, and two or three bucketfuls of hot water are thrown over your head. Your servant then comes up, wraps you in a bath-towel, and you go off to the dressing-room. There are no velvet couches to lie on, so you proceed to rub down and dress: then tea is brought, you have a cigarette, and ride languidly home. The Afghan bath is an excellent institution for cleanli-

ness in a hot climate, but it certainly is neither exhilarating nor stimulating. There is little or no arrangement made for ventilating the bath-room, and it is customary, in the bitter cold of a Kabul winter, for poor people to obtain permission to sleep there at night. It is a not uncommon occurrence for one or two to be found suffocated in the morning.

CHAPTER VI

THE KABUL BAZAARS

The unpopular Governor and his toothache. The meeting in the Erg Bazaar. Appearance of the Kabul Bazaars. The shops and their contents. Boots, shoes, and cobblers. Copper workers. The tinning of cooking pots. Impromptu tobacco pipes. Tobacco smoking by the Royal Family. Silk and cotton. "Bargaining." "Restaurants." Tea drinking. Confectioners. The baker's oven. Flour mills. The butcher's shop. Postîns and their cost. Furs. Ironmongers. Arms. "The German sword." The Afghan tulwar. Rifles and pistols. Bows. Silver and gold-smiths. Caps and turbans. Embroidery. Grocers: tea, sugar, soap, and candles, and where they come from. Fruiterers. Tailors. "The Railway Guard." Costume of the Kabuli townsmen. Personal effect of the Amîr on costume. Drug shops.

One day soon after I arrived in Kabul the Governor of the city—the notorious Naib Mir Sultan—of whom I shall have more to say later, sent to say he was very ill. He had been suffering for days from an agonising toothache. I was advised not to visit the Naib because he was not in favour with the Prince. I therefore sent him some medicine and directed the Armenian interpreter to go, and if he found a decayed tooth to introduce a small pellet of cotton wool soaked in creosote. A day or two after, as I was returning from the hospital, I met the Naib in one of the bazaars. He was surrounded by a guard of the military police, whose Chief he was, and by a great crowd of servants. At that time he was execrated in Kabul. He did not, however, look very

evil. He had a dark skin, but not a disagreeable face. I inquired how he was, and he said the pain had entirely left him. He dismounted, and I examined the tooth in the street. It was decayed and the socket inflamed. I wanted to pull it out there and then with my fingers, but he would not let me touch it.

The bazaar in which I met the Naib is a modern one built by the present Amîr, the street is wider, and the shops are better built than those of the other bazaars.

There are three chief bazaars or streets of shops in Kabul. Two lead from the direction of the workshop gorge eastward through the town. One running near the foot of the mountains to the Bala Hissar, and the other near the middle of the town. These two are for a considerable distance broader, better paved, and more carefully roofed than the others. In the best part the houses are two stories high. They are flat-topped, and beams supporting a roof to the bazaar extend across from house to house. In other parts, where the houses are but one story, the bazaar is not roofed in. The other chief bazaar extends from a strong wooden bridge over the Kabul river, southward through the middle of the town. This, too, is roofed over in a part of its course, but it is neither so broad nor so carefully built as the others. There are a few smaller bazaars, and many narrow streets or passages striking off in different directions from the others. They are badly paved, undrained, and exceedingly dirty. The shops are small and open, like stalls, with no front window. The floor of each is raised three or four feet above

the street, and the shopkeeper sits cross-legged among his goods. At night he closes his shop with shutters, fastening the last shutter with a chain and a curious cylindrical padlock. Some parts of the bazaars are reserved for the sale or manufacture of particular articles. There is, for instance, the shoe bazaar. This is in the street leading from the wooden bridge south. The Afghan shoes are of heavy make, are sewn with strips of leather, and have the pointed toe turned upwards. Some are elaborately embroidered with gold. The women's shoes or slippers are generally green in colour, and are made with a high heel. They are almost sandals, having an upper only at the toe. They are awkward things to walk in, I have noticed, for they drop at the heel at every step. The native shoes are those most on show, but one can buy English boots of all kinds, from the elaborate patent leather of Northampton to the three-and-sixpenny army boot. There are also long Russian boots made of beautifully soft leather: these are the fashion among the highest class; and a cheaper Turkoman boot of a similar shape with a high heel that cavalry soldiers who can afford the luxury invest in. A shopkeeper is, however, none too ready to show you his best goods. He does not exhibit them in the shop, for the Government officials have a way of buying anything that takes their fancy at their own price.

I noticed in the boot bazaar that in the three-foot space under the floor of the shop the poorer men, the cobblers, did their business. There was just room to sit, and there the cobbler sat stitching, with his nose on a level with the knees of the passers by. A

customer with a shoe to mend squats down beside him and gives his orders. Cobblers who can't afford to rent even such a "shop" as this, sit by the road-side in the shade of a wall or a tree and carry on their business.

There is a copper bazaar. Though copper is found in Afghanistan, most of that used comes from India. This bazaar is in the street running east through the middle of the city. Here, there is shop after shop of men hammering out copper into the different shaped utensils: the long necked vase for the chillim, or hubble-bubble pipe: bowls and pots for cooking kettles: water vases with long neck and handle and tapering curved spout. The shapes are all those made by their fathers and forefathers; there is no new design invented. The pots used for cooking are tinned over inside and out. Supposing the tin has worn off your cooking pots, you send to the bazaar for one of these men. It is interesting to watch how he sets to work.

He brings a pair of hand-bellows with him and a stick of tin. Settling himself on the ground in the garden he digs a shallow hole six or seven inches across. This is to be his furnace. From it he leads a little trench about six inches long, which he covers over with clay, placing his finger in the trench as he moulds each piece of clay over it. Thus he has a pipe leading to his furnace. The nozzle of his bellows is fitted into the distal end of the pipe. He begs a little lighted charcoal from the cook with which to start his "furnace," piles it over with black charcoal, blows his bellows, and soon has what fire he wants. A small boy with him having cleaned the

pots with mud and sand, he places the first one, supported on three stones, over his furnace. When it is at the proper heat he rubs it round with a rag smeared with wood ashes, touches it with the stick of tin, then rubs it round again with his wood ashes, and the pot is tinned. If you are watching him he may make it extra superfine with another touch of tin and another rub with the wood ashes, and so he goes on till he has finished them all.

Supposing the pot to be tinned is a large one, the small boy, having thrown in the mud and sand, stands inside the pot, and jerking it round and round with his hands, cleans it with his bare feet. Describing the way that the "furnace" is made reminds me that I have seen men prepare an impromptu tobacco pipe the same way. The principle is exactly the same, only instead of blowing air through the pipe they suck the smoke from the tobacco which they have lit with a match. To lie on your face on the ground in order to get a smoke seems rather excessive, but if a man has tobacco, a match, and cannot get a pipe, this is one way out of the difficulty. I have also seen a soldier use his bayonet for a pipe. He filled the cylindrical part that fits on the muzzle of the rifle with tobacco, and having put a lighted match on the top, he fitted his two hands round the lower end and sucked the smoke between them. Most Afghans are inveterate smokers. The tobacco they smoke is not the American tobacco that we have. It grows in Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, and many parts of Afghanistan, but the best comes from Persia. The leaf is paler, apparently uncured and is not pressed,

nor cut, but simply broken up. I have smoked it, but it is very hot in a short pipe. It smokes best in the chillim. The Amîr himself when he smokes, which is not often, generally has a Turkish cigarette. The eldest Prince, Habibullah, smokes cigars from India. Prince Usuf, the Amîr's uncle, one of the younger sons of Amîr Dost Mahomed, smokes American birdseye tobacco. He is a courtly old gentleman, dresses exceedingly well, and is of the bluest of the blue blood, and it strikes one as very incongruous to see him puffing away at a short clay pipe ; he never smokes anything else.

There is the cotton and silk bazaar in the street leading from the gorge to the Bala Hissar. The shops here are mostly kept by Hindus. Every Hindu in Kabul, and there is quite a colony of them, has to pay a poll tax, and is not allowed to wear a blue turban. It must be either yellow or red—generally they wear red.

Besides the rolls of silk from India and Bokhara, and the plain and printed cotton goods which come from India, there are many English undergarments to be seen : for English clothing of every kind is very fashionable among the upper classes in Kabul. There are cotton and merino vests, socks, and handkerchiefs hanging on strings across the little shops. The Hindu shopman in Kabul strikes one as oppressively civil, he "salaams" so low with the hand on the forehead. The Afghan trader does not. You can buy or not as you please. If he has a piece with a yard or two more than you want, often he will not cut it for you. You can take the lot or leave it, he is not particular. But Afghan and

Hindu alike ask you a much higher price than they will afterwards take.

If you want to buy anything, you send for a shopkeeper to your house and ask his price. He tells you. You smile derisively, and offer him just a third. He is pained, he is indignant, the thing is absurd, he gave a great deal more than that himself. You say, "Good morning." Then he says—Well, he will do what he can, for you are a friend to the poor, but it will be a dead loss to him; and he knocks a little off his price. You say, "No," but add a little on to yours, and so it goes on for a variable time, derision and sarcasm on your side—a pained indignation on his. Finally, he takes less than half of what he asked originally, and is well paid then; but when he goes away you feel rather as if you had swindled the poor man.

Though shopkeepers in Kabul selling similar goods tend to congregate in the same bazaar, they do not do so to the same degree as in some of the towns of India. You find boot shops in other streets than the chief boot bazaar; and so with other goods for sale.

In the tea-drinking shops you see a large samovar, about three feet high, in one corner, where water is kept boiling hot by the glowing charcoal in the centre pipe. Men drop in and seat themselves, cross-legged, for a chat and a cup of tea. The shops will hold some three or four. The Afghans like their tea very hot, weak, very sweet, and flavoured with cardamoms, which are put unpowdered into the teapot. They pay a pice, that is a little less than a farthing, for a cup of tea. If a man has some tea with him, and he often has, he can always send to one of these shops

for a teapot and hot water. He pays a pice for it. There is also a preparation they call "kaimagh-chai," but this is comparatively expensive, and is drunk only at festivals or times of rejoicing. It is a mixture of tea, sugar, cream, soda, and cardamoms. It is thick, curdy, pink, and very sweet—not at all bad to taste, but very "rich." The teapots, cups, and saucers in use are generally from Russia. Some of the richer men have them from China or Japan.

Besides the tea-drinking shops there are the eating-houses. These have no marble-topped tables or velvet-covered chairs. The shop is the same as any other shop, except that it looks rather dirtier, probably from the amount of fat or oil used in the cooking. The customer carries his lunch away with him, or stands outside to eat it. The space inside the shop is taken up by the cook and the cooking pots. They sell kabobs—little cubes of meat skewered on a long stick and grilled over charcoal. A stick of kabobs, with some bread, is uncommonly good if you are hungry ; you tear the meat off the stick with your fingers. They have also meat, finely minced and mixed with fat, which they squeeze in their hand round a thin stick and cook over charcoal. It looks rather like sausage, I don't know what it is called. They use any kind of meat for this—mutton—or, failing that, the flesh of the camel or horse that age or infirmity has rendered unfit for further service. There are many kinds of pilau too. Rice, boiled skilfully till every grain is soft without being soppy, is piled over the meat, stewed to such tenderness that you can easily tear a piece off with

the fingers. There are chicken pilau, mutton pilau, sweet pilau with raisins in it, and so on. Kourma is another dish—meat stewed in small pieces and eaten with stewed fruit.

For his pudding the Afghan goes to another shop, the confectioner's. Here there are sweets of many kinds: sugared almonds, "cocoa-nut ice," sweets made in the shape of rings, sticks, animals, or men; gingerbread, soft puddings made of Indian corn, much sweetened. In the summer different kinds of iced sherbet, lemon, orange, or rose are sold in the street.

In the bread shop, the baker squatting on the floor kneads out the dough into large flat cakes and claps it in his oven. The oven is a large clay jar about three feet across and three feet deep, with the neck a foot in diameter. This is buried beneath the shop, the mouth being level with the floor, and is packed round with earth. It is heated by making a fire inside. When the heat is sufficient, and the fire has burnt out, the baker puts his hand in the mouth and flaps the flat doughy cake against the wall of the oven, where it sticks. When baked, it generally brings away some grains of charcoal or grit with it. You pay two pice (a little less than a halfpenny) for a cake of bread a foot and a-half long, a foot wide, and an inch thick.

Flour is ground in a water mill. A hut is built by the side of some stream which has a sufficient fall. The water pours down a slanting trough over the water wheel, and turns two circular flat stones which are arranged horizontally in the hut. The miller, squatting down, throws the grain into an

aperture in the upper wheel and scoops up the flour as it is ground away from between the stones on to the floor. The bread made from the flour varies very much in grittiness, some is hardly at all gritty. The Afghans are very particular about eating their bread hot, they don't care to eat it cold unless they are on a journey. One of their proverbs is, "Hot bread and cold water are the bounteous gifts of God," "Nan i gurrum wa ab i khunuk Niamati Illahist."

Butchers' shops are not very common; meat is an expensive luxury. Mutton is the usual meat eaten. By very poor people other meats are sometimes eaten, especially in the form of mince. In the latter case it is impossible to say what the meat is, so the impecunious Afghan assumes it to be mutton. If there is any meat in the mince that is unclean—on the shopkeeper's head be it for selling anything "nujis" to a True Believer.

There is very little meat to be seen hanging in the shops, for the climate being a hot one and flies numerous, the meat will not keep more than a few hours. What the joints are it is impossible to say, for they cut the sheep up quite differently from an English butcher. At one time I used to try and puzzle out when the joint came to the table what it was: I gave up the attempt afterwards as futile. The mutton is excellent in quality and very cheap. I wished to give a dinner one day to a dozen Afghans—the Amîr's palanquin bearers. I bought a sheep for 4*s*. 6*d*., some rice, butter, bread, and firewood, and the whole cost less than 6*s*.

Kabul is famous all over Central Asia for the

manufacture of the postîn or sheepskin pelisse. While riding along the bazaar running from the wooden bridge south, I used to wonder at one place what the faint disagreeable smell was due to. I found on enquiry that there was a manufactory of postîns there. I have not seen the whole process of tanning. The skin of the sheep or lamb with the wool on it is cleaned and scraped, then soaked in the river and pegged out in the sun to dry; afterwards it is tanned yellow with pomegranate rind. The leather is beautifully soft, and it is usually embroidered artistically with yellow silk. The wool is, of course, worn inside. The better ones are trimmed at the collar and cuffs with astrakhan. There are several different kinds of sheepskin postîns. The long one reaching from shoulder to ankle, with ample folds that you wrap yourself up in on a winter night: there is nothing more cosy and warm to sleep in. The sleeves are very long and are more for ornament than use. These are but little embroidered, they cost from fifteen to thirty rupees. There is a short one with sleeves, which is elaborately embroidered. This is worn in the winter by the soldiers—cavalrymen, for instance, if they can afford the necessary ten or fifteen rupees. Similar but cheaper ones with less beautiful wool and no embroidery, can be bought for four or five rupees. There is the waistcoat postîn of lamb's wool, which is made without sleeves, this costs two rupees six annas Kabuli, or half-a-crown English. These waistcoat postîns and the long sleeping postîns are used by all classes, rich and poor. The others are used only by the poorer classes, the peasants and the soldiers.

A gentleman or a man of position would no more think of putting one on, were it ever so beautiful and elaborate in its embroidery, than would a resident of the west of London think of appearing in the "pearlies" and velvet embroidered coat of the coster. The rich men wear, in the winter, coats of cashmere, velvet or cloth, lined with beautiful furs from Bokhara and other parts of Asiatic Russia.

The most valuable fur that is imported I have not seen, only the Amîr wears it, and he rarely; from the description they gave me I conclude it is sable. The next most valuable is the "Khuz," a species of Marten. There are two kinds, the Khuz i Zulmati, which is dark, and the Khuz i Mahtabi, which is much lighter and of an inferior quality. These can be bought sewn together in the sheet, either with or without the tails of the animals attached. There were twenty-four skins in the sheet I bought. The shopman asked £10 for it, but he let me have it the next day for £6.

Then there is the "Altai," a beautiful fur taken from the inner side of the leg of the red fox. A sheet consists of many pieces, each with a deep black centre surrounded by a dark red margin. I bought one in Turkestan for £6, which I was told was cheap. Squirrel fur made into the sheet, with or without tails, either grey or grey and white, is very popular. It is called "Sinjab," and is less expensive than the others. There are several other cheaper furs—a white one they call cat skin—though of what cat I do not know, the fur of it soon rubs off; and a short brown fur, the name of which I never heard. Astrakhan, of which the Amîr has the monopoly, is exported largely to Russia and in small quantities to

India. It is used chiefly to cover the round or straight-sided Russian hats that Afghan Colonels and Captains wear. It is difficult to get hold of any in the Kabul bazaars.

In the ironmongers' shops are nails, hammers, locks, knives, and horse-shoes. The last are made broad, flat and rather thin, in the Russian style. I was told that this pattern is considered to protect the frog of the horse's foot from the numerous stones and pebbles he has to go over on a journey. Shoes in the English pattern are more expensive. I heard that the Amîr had imposed a small tax on the sale of them.

In the "arms" shops are swords, guns, and pistols of various kinds. There is the curved "shamshir," or scimitar, with a cross hilt. Most of these come, Mr. Pyne told me, from Birmingham, some, I suppose, from Germany. They can be tied in a knot if necessary. The Armenian interpreter one day brought me a sword to examine; he was thinking of buying it for eight rupees. It looked like an English sword, and was brightly burnished. I put the point on the ground and bent the sword to try its spring. It seemed easy to bend. I raised it up and it remained in the position to which I had bent it.

"Wah!" said the Armenian, "and he is English sword!"

"Oh, no," I said, "German."

Then I had to explain where Germany was. But I don't know, it may have been English; I hope not. I advised him not to buy it for eight rupees. He said, "I not have him at one pice."

There is the straight-pointed Afghan sword, the blade of which broadens to three inches at the handle. The back from point to handle is straight and thick. There is no handguard. The best of these are made in Khost, a frontier district south of the Kurram valley. The blades are often beautifully damascened, and the handles of ivory or horn are carved and inlaid with gold or silver or studded with jewels. They are very sharp, the steel is of good quality, and they are rather expensive. For one of good quality without a scabbard, and which was not elaborately ornamented, I gave sixty rupees. I had a scabbard made in Kabul. The scabbard is made of two long pieces of wood thinned and hollowed out to receive the sword ; these are fastened together and covered with leather. Formerly they were covered with snake skin. Mine was covered with patent leather and mounted with silver. I weighed out rupees to the silversmith, and when the mounts were finished he weighed them out to me before they were attached to the scabbard. The scabbard is made longer than is usual in England, for it takes the handle all but about an inch, as well as the blade of the sword. In these shops are also rifles for sale—the native jezail with a curved stock ornamented with ivory, and with a very long barrel fastened on with many bands. The Afghan hillmen and the Hazaras make these, and they are good shots with them. They make their own powder also. There are old-fashioned English rifles, flint locks and hammer locks : some very heavy, with a two-pronged support hinged on to the barrel, presumably to rest on the

ground and steady the rifle when taking aim; native pistols and old English pistols of various kinds; old shirts of chain mail and small shields with bosses on. These are not used now except for ornament. Lance or spear heads, old Indian and English helmets, firemen's helmets; powder flasks made of metal or dried skin; and heavy tough very strong wooden bows, with a straight handpiece in the middle of the bow: these were used in the time of Dost Mahomed. I never saw any arrows, and the bows were sold merely as curiosities. Boys and lads, nowadays, use a bow with two strings which are kept apart by a two-inch prop. They use it to kill birds, shooting small stones from a strip of leather attached to the two strings.

The silver and goldsmiths make native ornaments similar to those one sees in India: broad, thin perforated bracelets; studs for the nostril, that the hillwomen wear—this custom, however, is not so common as among the Hindus; necklaces of coins and discs, amulet boxes, belt buckles, and so on. Nothing original or peculiar to Afghanistan seems to be made.

In the cap shops there are rows of small conical caps, hanging on pegs and on bars across the top of the shop. The Afghan turban is wound round the cap which is jammed on the back of the head. If put more forwards the weight of the turban causes a painful pressure on the forehead.

There are several different kinds of caps. The Kabul cap is thickly quilted with cotton-wool. Inside, at the top, a little roll of paper enclosed in silk is sewn. This is supposed to have a sentence

from the Koran written on it to protect the wearer from harm. I opened a roll one day to see what was written, but found the paper blank. The best caps are embroidered all over with gold thread from Benares. Some are but little embroidered, have simply a star at the top, and others not at all. Some are made of velvet, and some of cloth. Those from Turkestan are not quilted. They are not so heavy as the Kabul caps, are of very bright colours, and are worn indoors or at night. The caps are of all prices, from three or four pice to fifteen rupees. The lungis, or turbans, are also of many different kinds ; the commonest being cotton dyed blue with indigo —these are of native make : or of white cotton or muslin from India. A better kind are of blue or grey cotton, embroidered at the ends with gold thread, in wider or narrower bars, according to the price. These come from Peshawur, and they look very handsome on a tall dark-skinned Afghan. Others are from Cashmere, most beautifully embroidered, and are fawn-coloured, turquoise-blue, black, green, or white. The ordinary length of a lungi is nine yards ; the cashmere, being thicker, are not so long. The only white cashmere lungi I ever saw was the Amîr's. He gave it me one day ; but that is a story I will relate further on.

In the cap shops are also Kabul silk handkerchiefs for sale. They are of beautiful colours—purple, crimson, and green. I do not know what dyes are used, but they are not fast, they wash out ; and the silk is of poor quality, not to be compared with English or French silk. In these shops, too, are gold

brocades of various kinds, mostly from Delhi or Agra. Some, however, are made in Kabul, the design being copied from English or European embroidery that has been imported. Many of the workers imitate European embroidery with wonderful exactness, though they do not seem to be able to originate any new designs. If one bolder than the rest attempts to do so, the design is greatly wanting in beauty of outline. The brocades are used for tea-cloths, and by the Amîr and richer men for table-covers. The skill of these men is also called into use to decorate the dresses of ladies, and the tunics of pages and gentlemen.

In the grocer's shop the most prominent things to be seen are the big loaves of white sugar from India and Austria. The native sugar is made in small conical loaves—about a pound each. It is very sweet, but not so white as European sugar. The loaves of native sugar are always wrapped round with coloured paper—pink, red, or blue—so that the shop looks quite smart. The tea for sale is chiefly green tea from Bombay. It is brought by koffla—camel and donkey caravan—from Peshawur through the Khyber Pass, by the travelling merchants or carriers. Many of the rich men of Kabul own trains of camels, which they hire out for carrying purposes. There is black tea also, but in small quantities and expensive. It is said to be brought from China through Asiatic Russia and Turkestan. The Afghans always call black tea "chai-i-famîl."

The candles are of two kinds, tallow and composite. The tallow are of native manufacture—dips—with cotton wick. They are not used very much, as

they gutter and melt away very quickly. There is a much better tallow candle made in Afghan Turkestan, thicker than the Kabul candle, which burns exceedingly well. The composite candles are much more popular, and are not very expensive. They come from Bombay or Peshawur, and are used largely by the Amîr and the richer men. The poorer people use an oil lamp, very much the shape of the old Roman lamp. It is of clay or terra-cotta, saucer-shaped, with or without a handle, and with a spout. The cotton wick floats in the oil, and extends a quarter of an inch beyond the spout, where it is lighted. The oil they use is, I believe, almond oil : it is called "Têl-i-kûnjit." It has a smoky flame, and gives a poor light. Some lamps on the same principle are larger, elaborately made of brass, and hang by chains from the ceiling ; they have four or five wicks. Others, also with three or four wicks, are made of tinned iron ; they stand on the ground supported on an upright about a foot high. Paraffin oil from Bombay can also be bought, and some of the richer men occasionally use cheap paraffin lamps "made in Germany."

Soap is both native and imported. The native is in saucer-shaped lumps. It is not used for washing the hands and face—an Afghan rarely uses soap for this purpose ; but for washing clothes or harness. It is rather alkaline and caustic. A soap "plant," with its tanks, has been erected in the workshops, and doubtless when the working of it is better understood the soap will be of usable quality. At present it does not sell. Other soap in the form of tablets is imported from India, Russia, and Austria.

By what route it comes from Austria I do not know, unless, like so many cheap German goods, it comes through India. Russian soap is the cheapest and worst, it crumbles up in your hands the second time you use it. Next is the Austrian, which is not at all bad ; the best and most expensive is the English. The native salt—powdered rock salt, pinkish in colour—is not very good. You have to use so much before you can taste it. I don't think any salt is imported. Spices of most kinds can be bought—pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and so on ; but these are bought at drug shops.

Fruit shops are in great numbers, for fruit and vegetables form important items in the diet of the poorer people : in the summer fresh fruit and vegetables, and in the winter dried fruits, particularly the mulberry, are largely used. The fruit shops are, as a rule, arranged very tastefully. Grapes of different kinds are in great quantities and exceedingly cheap—a donkey load for a rupee. Melons and water melons, apples, quinces, pomegranates, pears, and various kinds of plums, nectarines, peaches, and apricots. Dried fruits, almonds, roasted peas, pistachio nuts, dried mulberries, apricots, and raisins, are sold by the grocers. Fresh fruit, as soon as it is ripe, and even before, is eaten in large quantities, far more than is good for the health of the people.

The Englishmen in Kabul had to be exceedingly careful in eating fruit. Unless taken in very small quantities it produced, or predisposed to, troublesome bowel affections. The natives, though, as a rule, not so susceptible as the English, were affected in the same way, sometimes dangerously, occasionally fatally.

In a tailor's shop you see one man sitting on the ground hard at work with a sewing-machine, another cutting out or stitching. There are no ready-made clothes in a tailor's shop, these are to be bought elsewhere. A rich man has, as a rule, a tailor attached to his establishment. Those less rich having procured their material send for a tailor from the bazaar. He cuts out the material in front of the employer and takes away the garment to his shop to make up. This is a check upon the tailor, so that there can be no purloining of material. Ready-made clothes, new or secondhand, are for sale in many shops. English coats of all kinds sell readily, especially old military uniforms. One day a man walked into the hospital evidently thinking himself rather smart. For the moment I was startled: I thought he was an Englishman. He was dressed in the complete costume of a railway guard.

The costume of the hillmen and peasants is the same as that worn by the Khyberi Pathans, which I have described. An Afghan in typical native town costume—say a mirza, or clerk—is dressed somewhat more carefully than the Pathan. He wears the loose oriental trousers, or pyjamas, gathered in at the waist and hanging in multitudinous folds draping from the hip to the inner side of the knee and ankle, the band at the ankle fitting somewhat closely. The native shoes with turned up pointed toes are worn without socks, that is, unless the wearer is wealthy. The embroidered camise, or shirt, falls over the pyjamas nearly to the knee. A waistcoat with sleeves is worn reaching a little below the waist and slit at the hip. Finally, a loose robe or coat worn unfastened and with

long sleeves, reaches midway between the knee and ankle. The waistcoat is of velvet or cloth, quilted and generally embroidered with gold. The coat is of thinner material, and, as a rule, of native cloth. The townsmen, however, generally, though not always, modify the native costume with European innovations. As a rule the higher they rise in the social scale the more Europeanized they become—in costume if in little else. The Afghans, though invariably spoken of as religious fanatics, are far less "conservative" than the Mahomedans of India. You never see one of the latter with an English hat on : a very great many refuse to adopt even European boots. In Afghanistan the readiness to become Europeanized, at any rate in appearance, probably depends upon the personal influence of the Amîr. After European weapons and knives—these are readily adopted by all who can afford them—the first thing taken is the belt with a buckle, instead of the cummerbund or waistshawl. It is, however, open to question whether this innovation is an improvement, for in a climate with such great variations of temperature as that of Afghanistan the cummerbund is an excellent protection to the abdominal organs. Socks are readily adopted even by the conservative. Then come European coats, which are worn by a great many of the townsmen. After the coats, European boots. Trousers are worn, as a rule, only by the upper classes, including the court pages and by some of the soldiers. They are made somewhat loosely and are worn over the pyjamas. When a gentleman or Khan arrives at home after the business of the day is finished, he throws off his European garb and appears in native

costume. [illegible] he [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] in the [illegible] carpet [illegible] any [illegible] than a [illegible].

Finally, English [illegible] worn by the [illegible] more [illegible] hats, semiglobular [illegible] top, have been worn for [illegible] and officers in the army. This was not such a striking innovation, for the somewhat similar Turkoman hat of astrakhan has been familiar to the Afghan for ages.

In the drug shops are native drugs for sale. Some few English drugs can be bought: quinine, of which the Afghans are beginning to realize the value; and chloral hydrate, of which some are beginning to learn the fascination. The native drugs are such as manna, camphor, castor oil, and purgative seeds of various kinds.

CHAPTER VII

ETHICS

Sir S. Pyne's adventure in the Kabul river. The Tower on the bank. Minars of Alexander. Mahomedan Mosques. The cry of the Priest. Prayers and Religious Processions. Afghan conception of God. Religious and non-Religious Afghans. The schoolhouse and the lessons—Priests. Sêyids: descendants of the Prophet—The lunatic Séyid. The Hafiz who was fined. The Dipsomaniac. The Valet who was an assassin. A strangler as a Valet. The chief of the police and his ways. Danger of prescribing for a prisoner. "The Thing that walks at night." The end of the Naib. Death-bed services. Graves and graveyards. Tombs. The Governor of Bamian. Courtship and weddings among the Afghans. The formal proposal by a Superior Officer. The wedding of Prince Habibullah. Priests as healers of the sick. The "faith cure." Charms. The "Evil Eye." Dreadful fate of the boy who was impudent. Ghosts.

WHEN we had been in Kabul about a fortnight, His Highness the Amir nearly lost the services of Mr. Pyne. It occurred in this way. We were riding along the lanes around Kabul, accompanied by a guard of troopers, and Mr. Pyne was lamenting that he had drunk *water* for lunch. "There it was," he said, "still deadly chill." He certainly had water enough and to spare very shortly after. He had galloped on a little ahead towards the river, and when we turned the corner expecting to catch sight of him, he was nowhere to be seen. The Kabul river, swollen by rains and melting snow, was roaring and foaming by. I galloped along the bank expecting to see him. Hearing a shout, I looked back and saw one of the sowars, who was some yards behind me,

jump off his horse and run to the bank, which was here some three or four feet above the river. I sprang off my horse and ran up just in time to see Pyne dragged out, dripping, by the lash of the soldier's whip.

He was galloping, he said, along the path on the river bank when he came to a place where the bank was lower and the river partly overflowed it. Never thinking but what there was firm bottom he did not stop, and down his horse sunk till Pyne was up to his armpits in water, icy cold. The next minute the current swept him off, and he found himself under water near his horse's heels, with the animal striking out violently in its endeavour to swim out. He came to the surface and tried to swim to the bank, but his arm caught in the rein, and he and his horse were swept together to the middle of the stream. He got clear of the rein by sinking, and struck for the bank again, but found the current turned his head up stream. Meanwhile, his riding boots became filled with water, and his turban and clothes soaked. The current swept him along, but by violent exertion he reached the bank, here four or five feet high, caught at a root and shouted. The root was torn out, and again he was swept into midstream : things now seemed to be getting serious. He saw two men wrestling on the bank, and a priest on a tower calling people to prayer, but no one would look round at him. With the heavy turban weighing him down, and wet clothes impeding his action, he could with difficulty keep his head above water. His breath was going, and his muscles aching when he once more got under the bank. He

saw me go galloping by, and shouted. The sowar who was near heard the shout, saw him, jumped off his horse, and threw him the lash of his whip.

Just under the bank his feet touched the bottom, and he stood up to his neck in water, holding on to the whip and panting to get enough breath to scramble up the bank. He was hauled out, dripping, and then we looked round for the horse. The poor brute was struggling and snorting, and being rapidly carried along midstream. Pyne ran along the bank and called to him. The animal turned his head, pricked up his ears, and struck vigorously for the shore. He reached the bank, and with two or three violent plunges scrambled up to dry land.

Pyne did not tell me all this on the river bank, for we mounted at once and galloped off to the workshops, so that he could get into dry clothes ; then I heard the whole story.

No evil resulted, but the soldiers of the guard were informed that if Mr. Pyne had been drowned their lives would have been forfeited—a strong inducement to a "guard" to be watchful and attentive.

I mentioned a "priest on a tower calling people to prayer." There are several towers round about Kabul, mostly to the north-west of the city. They are not of great height, and I doubt if they were built originally for religious minarets, for they are not attached to any mosque or musjid. Probably they were originally watch-towers put up by the peasants to guard their crops and herds from local marauders. On the mountains near Kabul one sees stupendous minars which were built, it is said, by Alexander to mark the road through Afghanistan to India. One of

these may be seen from Kabul on the distant peak of a mountain to the east of the Kabul valley ; another can be seen west of Kabul, from the elevation of the Paghman hills.

Mosques, or, as they are called, musjids, are numerous in Kabul. Some are comparatively large, with a courtyard and a domed roof with a minaret on each side. These have either a stream of water near, or a tank or well, for the use of those who come to pray : for Mahomedans invariably wash hands, feet, and face before they pray, and cleanse also the nostrils and mouth. There is a rush matting on the floor, and the worshippers leave their shoes outside, as they do when entering any house. Inside, the musjid is very empty and bare.

In the west wall is the niche, or mihrab, marking the direction of Mecca : or the Kibla, so called because of the Kibla or stone of Mahomed in Mecca, and towards this the worshippers turn their faces when they pray. In the larger musjids there is also a pulpit or platform with three steps, called a Mimbar, from which the Imām or preacher recites his Sabbath oration, Friday being the Sabbath. The Amîr's new rupee is stamped on one side with a decorative representation of a musjid with a three-stepped pulpit inside. At early dawn, and at four other times during the day, the priest mounts the minaret, and, standing upright, with his thumbs in his ears and his hands spread out, he utters in a penetrating falsetto voice the call of the faithful to prayer, "Allah akbar ! Allah akbar, Mahomed Ressul Allah !" and so on. "God is great, God is great, Mahomed is the Prophet of God. Come to

Prayers, Prayers are better than sleep. Come to salvation, God is great. There is no god but God." Then a few people begin to gather in, ten or twelve to a musjid.

They stand in a row, their faces towards Mecca, and the priest, having descended, stands in front of them with his face in the same direction. The priest recites the prayers, standing, or stooping with his head bent, kneeling or prostrating himself with his forehead touching the ground, according to the law of the ceremony. The people imitate the priest in his motions. They are supposed to repeat the prayers to themselves, but the prayers are in Arabic, which very few Afghans understand : so that if they have learnt them by heart they repeat them simply as a parrot does.

The smaller musjids have no courtyard, they are flat-roofed and open on one side, the roof being supported on that side by carved wooden pillars, and the musjid is raised three steps above the street. These have the mihrab, or altar, but no pulpit, and the minaret is replaced by a block of stone about a foot square outside the musjid, on which the priest stands to utter the call to prayer. These, too, have a stream, a well or tank, or some other water supply for ablution.

So far as I could judge the majority of people do not go to a musjid to pray except when there is some national calamity, such as a visitation of cholera. On these occasions they go in procession with bands of music and flags. I once saw a procession in the distance, but though I felt some curiosity to see it nearer, I did not thrust myself

unduly forward. There are drawbacks to doing so when Mahomedans are in a state of religious enthusiasm, for there is the possibility that one of them, overcome by excess of zeal, might obtain Paradise for himself by putting a knife into a Feringhi. It was not my ambition to be, in this way, a stepping-stone to Paradise.

Ordinarily such Afghans as profess religion go through the ceremony of prayer just where they happen to be when the time of prayer arrives. There are five periods appointed in the day. The first, just before sunrise; the second, just after midday; the third, an hour before, and the fourth, just after sunset; and the fifth, when they can no longer distinguish a white from a black thread. If they happen to be at Durbar they withdraw a little from the presence of the Amîr—for His Highness sits towards the west of the audience chamber—spread their cloaks or coats in lieu of "praying carpets," and turning towards the west, or Mecca, go through their prayers. The Amîr's two eldest sons pray regularly at the appointed times, and if they happen to be in Durbar at the time some of the chief officers join them.

His Highness the Amîr does not pray, at least so far as I know. I have never seen him do so openly, though it may be he prays in his heart. I have noticed that some of the greatest scoundrels at the Court are those who openly pray, or go through the form of prayer most regularly.

God, as conceived by the Afghans, seems to be an All-powerful Being, towards whom it is necessary to behave with the greatest politeness;

for if one detail of etiquette be omitted God will be offended—and then what harm He can bring upon the offender! It is far less dangerous to offend against a fellow-man by annexing his property or taking his life than to insult God by omitting to bow down to Him on one of the five appointed times.

They are many, however, who do not trouble to be religious. I do not know how they look at things: whether they think too much is required of them, or that they will probably be able to gain Paradise in the end by killing some unbelievers, or whether they simply don't care. When attending medically any man of education, I had always to be careful in enquiring whether he were "religious" or not; for if I gave a tincture (containing spirits) to any "religious" man, I got into trouble—he evidently considered that I wished to injure his prestige with God. With the uneducated or poorer people, I had no trouble of that kind. They swallowed anything I liked to give them unhesitatingly. I never found the "religious" Afghan a whit less ready to "do his neighbour in the eye" than a non-religious one.

The musjid is also the schoolhouse, and is presided over by the priest. A learned priest will get a good many pupils, but an unlearned one none. I have often seen boys from eight to thirteen years of age seated in a row in the musjid with the moolah, or priest, opposite them. Their open books are propped on an X shaped support, and the boys sway backwards and forwards as they drone out in a monotonous voice whatever they are committing to memory. The education of the majority seems to be of the very slenderest. They learn to read parts of certain

books and to write a little. With some, education is carried further, particularly among those who are intended for priests and mîrzas. Some of the latter study Persian sufficiently to write a well worded and flowery letter ; they learn, too, a certain amount of mathematics—arithmetic and Euclid. The moolahs learn some Arabic because the Koran is written in that language : otherwise, foreign languages are not taught. The Court pages seem to be taught rather more than other boys ; some of them learn the different languages of the country—Pushtu and Turki—as well as Persian. The Amîr's eldest son, Prince Habibullah, was learning English when I was in Kabul, though I never heard of anyone else learning the language. I have heard the Amîr speak Persian, Pushtu, and Turki. He told me he could speak Arabic also. Of Russian he said he knew two words only, I have forgotten what they were ; and of English he knew two words : "tree," he said, meant "dirakht," and "gown" meant a lady's dress.

The income of the priests is derived from their fees for performing the ceremonies of marriage and of burial, and from charitable donations.

A priest who is a Sêyid, or a direct descendant of the Prophet, is hereditarily a beggar. He can demand from anyone he pleases a sufficient sum of money for his wants. The Sêyids in Afghanistan do not seem to have the exclusive right of wearing green turbans : in fact, I never saw one with a green turban on, though I have often seen page boys and others not Sêyids wearing them. One of my servants, the mîrza, or secretary, was a Sêyid. He was a good sort of man in his way, and I quite liked him. However,

he used to smoke Churrus, or Indian hemp, and it affected his intellect. At times he behaved like one insane. He never attempted any violence towards me; in fact, though I was warned against him, I think he was too attached to me to do me an injury: but, perhaps, I am wrong in this; however, he never did do any harm. If he were upset he would cover his face with chalk and walk about shaking his head in a dejected way, muttering, "Tobah, tobah," Alas! alas! One day he removed all his clothing, and went out into the street with his beggar's wallet only. I sent one of the military police to fetch him back, and asked him if he were not ashamed to behave in that manner. He said he was tired of work. I said, "You are earning an honest living and are able to send money to your wife and children in Jelalabad." He said, Yes, but he had to write when he didn't want to write. It was better that he should go out with nothing and beg for his few wants. As for his wife and children, God would take care of them. There seemed a certain amount of "method" in this. Occasionally, however, he was very violent, though not with me, and I could hear him raving like a madman.

One of the compounders at the hospital was a Hafiz and a moolah; a Hafiz is one who from memory can repeat the whole Koran. He was a tall handsome young man with courtly manners. He lived at my house, and at daybreak I was often dreamily roused by his fine tenor voice as he was chanting his prayers. Once his early prayer was of considerable worldly service to me and the neighbourhood, for he found that the bathroom of my house was on fire; the

beams were already alight. He summoned assistance, the fire was soon put out and the matter ended. If the house had been burnt the affair would have reached the ears of the authorities, and the neighbours would have had a fine imposed upon them unless they could produce the incendiary! This young man had asked permission to live at my house because he could do so cheaply. He was saving money to pay off a debt incurred in Peshawur, his native town. I thought, What an honest worthy young man! but I found the money had been borrowed to pay off a fine imposed upon him for a murder he committed in Peshawur. He escaped hanging because there was an element of doubt in the case, and possibly for the reason that his elder brother had been some years in the British service. He admitted to me that he had stabbed the man, but he did not regret it. The man was a "bad man" and had injured him.

"Surely the Koran does not tell you to commit murder," I said.

"No," said he, "the Koran is God's book, but we are all sinners."

One of the hospital assistants, a Hindostani, working under me, was also a Hafiz and a priest. He was a very gentlemanly man of about forty-six, and well educated. He had been in the Bengal cavalry. I liked him very much, but, unlike most Mahomedans, he was a dipsomaniac. For a fortnight or so he would be miserably drunk. He drank the native spirit made from raisins, methylated spirit, or any kind of intoxicant he could get hold of. He explained his condition to me by saying that "Shâitan" came to him occasionally and said, "You

have drunk no shrâb for so long, now is a very good time to drink," and so he listened to Shâitan and drank. He afterwards gave up alcohol and took to chloral eating and opium smoking. I was very sorry for the man. I think he was not such a scoundrel as some of them.

When I first entered the service I picked up a man in Kabul who could speak a little English, and had him to look after my clothes and wait upon me —my valet. He was a short thick-set man, with a shaven head, on which he always perched a little red fez. He was wonderfully gentle with sick children, who were brought to me to prescribe for. He was very lazy, but was cowed at once if I were angry. I found he was a hired assassin who had escaped from Peshawur into Afghanistan. When I discharged him he made a large sum of money by gambling in the bazaar, and then returned to Peshawur. The last I heard of him was that he had been apprehended and was in jail.

At one time, after I returned from Turkestan, I used often to go and dine at the workshops with the other Englishmen, and two of the military police who guarded my house came at ten o'clock with a lantern to escort me home. My interpreter did not like my doing this at all, because I had to ride through some narrow winding streets and across the large orchard or garden before I reached the shops. He said, "It is known that you often come home at that time of night, and you might easily be shot, and there be no possibility of finding the man who fired at you. In that case your guard would be killed, and probably I as well for not warning you." How-

ever, it was too depressing to be always alone, and no one ever shot at me. One of these soldiers who came for me was a big, very handsome man, but he had a curious furtive look in his eyes. He used to pull my riding-boots off when I got home, and put out the candle. I remarked once upon the curious look in his eyes, and was told that all in his particular profession had that look.

I enquired what he did besides guarding my house. They said, "Have you not noticed that on some nights another man takes his place?" I had noticed it. I was then informed that he was one of the official executioners, whose duty it was to strangle certain of the prisoners in jail. The unfortunate is told one day that he will have the privilege that night of sleeping in a separate room. He is conducted there, and finds there is one other occupant of the room. As soon as he is asleep the other occupant—my friend!—secretly placing a noose round the neck of the sleeper, suddenly draws it tight and throws his whole weight upon the chest, striking the victim violently over the heart.

The late Governor of Kabul and chief of the police, Naib Mir Sultan, whom the Amîr hanged recently for his iniquities, largely employed this means of getting rid of prisoners. An anxious woman would come to him with perhaps a thousand rupees, and implore his intercession on behalf of her husband who was in jail. The Naib would say, "Yes, he would do what he could, he knew the case was coming on directly, but it was an expensive business; if she could bring another thousand perhaps the thing could be done." And he would keep her dangling on

some time, squeezing out of her all the money he could get, and then she would be informed officially that her husband had died in jail of an illness!

Sometimes a prisoner who was sick would ask permission to see the doctor, and he would be brought to me at the hospital with chains round his ankles, in charge of a soldier with fixed bayonet. But I was very careful about prescribing for a prisoner, for the Naib was an adept in the use of poisons as well as of stranglers, and a death might be imputed to me. Another way he had of removing objectionable men who were not prisoners. Some night two of the police knock loudly at a man's door, saying, "Get up at once, Amîr Sahib calls you." This is quite likely to be true, for His Highness often continues at his work late into the night, and the man hurries on his clothes and goes out with the police. He is never seen again; but some days afterwards his head is found in one place and his body in another. Then the widow in great distress goes before the Amîr and tells her story.

The Amîr naturally enquires, "Who is your husband?" The woman explains, saying, "Amîr Sahib sent for him on such and such a night." The Amîr, of course, tells her that he did not, and enquires if she can identify the soldiers who came for her husband. She cannot, for it being night and she a woman, she has never seen them. The natural conclusion is that some enemies of her husband have personated soldiers and murdered him.

I have, however, heard other explanations of these incidents.

The Naib was not a bad-looking man: he had a

dark skin, but rather an agreeable expression than otherwise. He never dared go out without a large guard of his police ; the townspeople would have torn him to pieces. Prince Habibullah disliked him even when I first entered the service in 1889, and, finally, his iniquities were proven to the Amîr. I forget what the particular charge against him was, but he was fined, they said, a hundred lacs of rupees to begin with, somewhere about half a million ! He paid it, and another fine was imposed which necessitated his selling up everything. Brought before the Amîr soon after this, he was insolent, and His Highness in exasperation seized him by the beard and struck him in the face. The soldiers then hurried him away to a tree outside. Someone suggested his praying. "Pray!" he said, with a laugh, "after a life like mine? No, I'll die as I have lived"; and they hanged him on the tree.

This is the story as I heard it at the time. I did not see him hanged, for there was a cholera epidemic in Kabul, and I was there. The Amîr was at Paghman in the mountains.

Though Friday is the Sabbath, the shops are open on that day as well as on other days in the week. Somewhat less work is done, especially at the time of the priests' oration in the principal musjids, about two in the afternoon. In Kabul the Amîr's workshops are closed, and the Out-patient Hospital also. The Amîr himself, too, does less work on that day, otherwise there is no great difference between the Sabbath and other days in the week.

I spoke just now of fees to a priest for a "burial" service, but, perhaps, that is hardly a correct term

to apply, for I never saw any service or ceremony performed at the actual time of burial. However, it is possible there may be, though I never saw one; but I have seen the service performed at a death-bed.

When I was in Turkestan a young officer, a cousin of the Sultana's, was ill. The Hakims, who were attending him, not knowing the use of the stethoscope, could not diagnose the case, and after some days I was sent for. I found that he had had pneumonia, or inflammation of the lung, and that instead of clearing up, the inflamed lung had become tubercular, and a cavity could be detected in it. He had developed consumption. I did what I could, but it was too late for any permanent relief to be afforded him.

He became worse, and one day when I called he was manifestly dying. I found several men sitting on the ground by the bedside reciting prayers continuously. I enquired why they were doing so at this time, and was told they would continue praying till he died, for he was then passing to Paradise over the narrow bridge whose edge was sharper than a razor, and that the continuous prayers kept away the evil spirits who were endeavouring to drag him down into the abyss.

The men praying were his nearest relations, and with them was a priest; for although it is the Mahomedan custom for the nearest relatives to recite the prayers on this occasion, a priest is generally sent for also.

The graves of the richer Afghans have upright headstones of marble or slate carefully shaped and

ornamented. The writing on them is in relief, the stone being chipped away from the letters. The tomb of an illustrious man is bricked round, about two feet high, and covered with a slab of marble. Occasionally one is surrounded by a fence : trees and flowers being planted in the enclosure. The grave of the Amîr's father near Kabul is cared for in this way. Others have a sort of small mosque or musjid built over them ; and the deceased, when his name is forgotten, becomes a holy man and a saint.

The grave of a poor man has a flat stone, the largest his friends can find, planted upright to mark the place of burial : many have no mark at all, but the collection of mounds is not to be mistaken. The graveyard is not walled in or enclosed. The tombs of the kings are, some of them, imposing. That of Timour Shah in Kabul (son of Ahmed Shah, founder of the Durani Empire) is a very fine piece of brick-work. A huge central dome is surrounded by a series of flat-roofed rooms, the ground plan of the structure being octagonal. No care is taken of it, and it is becoming dilapidated by time. The tomb of Babur Shah, just outside Kabul, is also becoming dilapidated. It is smaller and of marble, in the style of the smaller musjids, with pillows to support the roof. Another tomb just outside Kabul is built in the shape of a musjid. It is that of a grandson of Amîr Dost Mahomed. I knew his son very well, Sirdar Abdul Kûdus Khan. The latter once was of great service to the Amîr. In one engagement, by a brilliant charge, he completely turned the fortunes of the day. Success was too much for him, and he became presumptuous. He was accordingly ordered

into honourable confinement. Some time afterwards he was allowed to appear at Court, but for many years no appointment was given to him. Quite recently, he received office, being made Governor of the province of Bamian.

The marriage ceremony differs very much from ours in England. Firstly, the young Afghan does not see his sweetheart till she becomes his wife—at any rate he is not supposed to. He hears that such a man has a very pretty daughter, and that she is likely to have so much dowry. He therefore sends his mother or sisters on a visit to the harem. The ladies, properly veiled, are conducted there by their servants in a closed palanquin. On their return they give their opinion, and all the information they have managed to glean. If everything is satisfactory to the young man, he approaches the father or guardian, and makes his proposal. If he is accepted as a suitor, an opportunity is given to the young lady to see the swain herself, unobserved. She can, if she like, refuse him, and if she be a girl of strong character, may be successful in her refusal: but I know that sometimes considerable pressure is brought to bear, if her wishes are contrary to those of her father or guardian. Sometimes the young man if he holds a subordinate position, will prevail upon his superior officer to make the proposal for him to the father or guardian. It may have more weight. I once had this onerous and pleasing duty to perform. I marshalled all my servants, and rode off with as much ceremony as possible to the house of the young lady. I had a vague sort of an idea I might see her; but I did not: she saw me, which was not so

satisfactory. When I arrived at the house, I was conducted through the courtyard into an upstairs room, where the guardian—her brother in this case —received me. A party of gentlemen were in the room, and they all rose as I entered. After the usual salutations a chair was offered me; the rest seated themselves cross-legged round the room. I made a formal proposal in the name of my subordinate, and a discussion followed. I was surprised at the free and open way in which they said the man for whom I was making the proposal was a rascal and a liar, and that he had not the money he said he had. There was no delicate hinting that, perhaps, they had erred in assuming his fortune was such and such. I naturally anticipated a refusal; no, out of respect for me, he was accepted! Then a large tray of loaf sugar broken into pieces was brought in, and first I and the guardian, then the others, ate a little, and the rest was given to the servants. After that we had tea, and I rode off home again, where the anxious lover was waiting for me. I said,

"They called you very bad names."

"That matters little," said he; "did you eat the sugar?"

"Yes," I said.

"Ah! then all is well! the other is a custom."

The actual ceremony of marriage is performed at the house of the bridegroom, though there is often a reception at the bride's house afterwards—not that you see the bride or any other ladies. The father, guardian, or brothers receive you.

At the marriage ceremony the amount of dower is first discussed and settled, and then the priest

formally enquires, first of the bridegroom then of the bride's legal representative, whether they each agree to the marriage. On receiving an answer in the affirmative he pronounces a few short prayers and blessings, remaining seated while he does so, and the ceremony is concluded; sometimes, also, rings are exchanged. Then comes the reception of guests at the bride's house.

I was invited to the wedding of Prince Habibullah. I did not see the ceremony, where the priest blesses the union, but I attended the reception at the house of the bride's father. It happened to be in the suburbs, near where I was living, and I walked there escorted by my servants and guard. I was shown into a large flower-garden where several tents were erected. A great many guests had arrived, but not the Prince. Presently, I heard the "Salaam-i-Padshah"—the representative of our National Anthem—being played by a brass band. It is a solemn and slow chant, reminding one of a dead march: it is very impressive and by no means unmusical. I was told it was composed by an Englishman—who he was I do not know. Then the Prince rode into the garden, followed by his brother, Nasrullah Khan. Both were dressed in scarlet and gold uniforms. Prince Habibullah wore a military helmet with plumes, and Nasrullah Khan a grey astrakhan hat. I bowed as the Prince went by, and he pulled up to enquire why I had not taken possession of the tent prepared for me, and he pointed out a very gay one. There were people in it, but they turned out at once. The Prince gave orders to one of the chamberlains for tea and cigarettes to

be served for me there, and then rode on to another tent, where he dismounted. Taking his seat he received the salaams of the assembled guests. I sat in my tent, and people came in and chatted, and then went on to other tents. I drank tea, ate fruit, and smoked, while musicians and nautch women went through their performances. Then large trays of sweetmeats and sugar were brought to each of the tents, and when I had eaten a little I departed, for it began to rain. The servants of each of the guests carried away their master's tray of sweets, for it was the fast of Ramazan, when Mahomedans cannot eat nor drink till night. The father of the bride was the Shaghassi, or Master of the Ceremonies in Mazar, and when we left there he was made governor of Turkestan. Soon after we left, however, he had sunstroke—mania, the hakims said—and the Amîr recalled him to Kabul.

I found my horse waiting for me at the gate of the garden. In spite of the rain, the streets were crammed with people, and I had some trouble in the crowd, for my horse was restive, and plunged ; however, we got home without accident. I went also to the wedding of Prince Nasrullah, but I will describe that later.

Some of the priests have gained a certain amount of reputation as healers of the sick ; not by the administration of medicines, for that is a privilege reserved for the hakims and doctors, but by the employment of the "faith cure." It is an axiom in the Mahomedan religion that to utter the name of God a great number of times is of inestimable benefit to both body and soul ; also that if a part of the body be diseased, it is an efficient cure to

bind on it the written name of one of the attributes of God, "the Merciful," "the Compassionate," "the Restorer." The sick, therefore, go first to the priest for help, and by the payment of a fee obtain the written scroll. This is rolled up in silk or leather, or, if the patient be wealthy enough, is enclosed in a little cylindrical box of silver made for the purpose, and bound on the diseased part of the body. If the patient recover, great credit is given to the priest, and other sick people seek his aid. If recovery does not ensue, either the patient is resigned, considering that his "Nasîb" is thus written in the book of fate, or else by the payment of a larger fee he engages the medical skill of the hakims, or native physicians.

Every patient with chronic disease of any kind who came to me had one of these little packets fastened by a string round his arm or neck.

Many of the children, even those in good health, have similar charms fastened to them. I noticed that the Sultana, or her women, fastened one in a gold cylindrical box on the arm of the little Prince Mahomed Omar, soon after he was born. This was to protect him from accident or other evil. Sometimes, for the same purpose, a piece of string only, over which a few prayers have been recited, is tied round the child's limb. This is done by the poorer people. Against the "Evil Eye"—which, as far as I could understand, is the eye of "envy, hatred, and malice"—something blue is a great protection. Men wear turquoise rings, children and women turquoise ornaments or blue beads. When a man buys a new horse the servants at once fasten

a blue bead or ribbon among the hairs of his tail. It is not necessary for the blue to be seen: it is just as sure a protection when it is hidden. The Evil Eye is a dangerous weapon, so many possess it, and it works silently and secretly. Paralysis, wasting, rickets in children, impotence, and sudden death, the illness of cattle and horses—all these are imputed to the evil eye.

Just outside the house I occupied, after my return from Turkestan to Kabul, there was an open space with a small pond in the middle; this was a favourite playground for the boys of the neighbourhood. I rode through it as usual one morning on my way to the hospital. When I had finished my work and returned home again, my interpreter, who seemed rather upset about something, said to me—

"Sir, I very sorry you kill that boy to-day."

"What do you mean?" I said; "I've not killed any boy."

"Oh, yes, sir; you remember he called you Feringhi this morning."

I remembered then that while riding through the playground, one of the boys, a good-looking lad of about twelve, had attracted my attention by calling out something, and he laughed as he ran away. I looked up carelessly and then rode on, thinking no more about it. I said—

"I remember a boy saying something, but I didn't hear what it was."

"Sir, he very fool boy to call you Feringhi, but he is dead now."

"That is very sudden! What did he die of? I asked.

"Oh, sir, I poor man—what I know? You looked at him, and he died; perhaps trouble come for us."

"Nonsense," I said, "he must have died of something. Boys don't die because you look at them."

"Sir, in this country often it is they do!"

I indignantly said, "What do you mean? *I* haven't got the evil eye!"

He looked at me meaningly, then looked on the ground and shook his head dolefully: I couldn't persuade him that the thing was a ridiculous impossibility. As there is a kind of vendetta in Afghanistan I rather wondered what would happen next. I told my interpreter to make enquiries and find out what the boy really died of. He said,

"Why for we make enquiries? Better it is we keep quiet for a few days and say nothing."

I never heard what was the cause of death, and the matter blew over.

Besides the evil eye the Afghans believe in other forms of magic; in certain days of the week being lucky, and others unlucky; in ghosts, and jins, or devils. A man told me one day that the house he lived in was formerly occupied by the three sisters of one of the kings, Shah Shujah, I think it was, and that they were evil women. One night on his return home, just as he entered the house he heard sound of women's laughter in the bath-room on the ground floor. Wondering who could be there, he opened the door. Three women, whom he did not recognize, sprang up and rushed, laughing, through the further door into the inner bath-room. He slammed the door to, and fastened it, and hurried upstairs, where he found his wife and the women of the house-

hold. He enquired who were the women in the bath-room. They said there could be no women. The house was of the usual kind—only one door leading from the street into the courtyard, and every one entering could be seen. Lights were procured, and he descended to the bath-room, unfastened the door, opened it, and peeped in—no one was there. He went across to the further door and found it fastened with a chain and padlock on the outside in the usual way. He thought, "The women cannot have fastened themselves in." He took the key from his pocket, unlocked the door and looked in: this room also was empty. He is convinced he saw the wraiths of the women who formerly occupied his house.

Almost every house in Kabul has its ghost or jin. The house I had on my return from Turkestan had a reputation. The soldiers who were put to guard it in the winter while I was at the Palace at last refused to sleep in one of the ground floor rooms. They said it was haunted, that jins and devils came and pinched them, and moved their rifles and belts from where they had placed them. So in spite of the intense cold they moved out into the porch of the big gate opening from the courtyard into the street, and there they took up their quarters permanently. One day, just before sunset, after I had returned, the syce came out of the stable, which was under the room I occupied, and called one of the other servants. The latter came to me afterwards and said that just as it was beginning to get dusk he went to look into the stable, as the syce had called him. To his astonishment he saw what seemed to him to be two small

children running round the legs of the bay horse, and jumping on its neck and off again. He went forward to gain a clearer view, and the children, or jins, as he called them, disappeared. He searched the stable thoroughly, and found nothing out of the way, except that the bay horse was trembling and covered with sweat.

Many similar stories were related to me at different times, but though for months I slept alone in the "haunted wing" I never saw any ghost, jin, or devil—except those clothed with flesh and blood; doubtless it was a privilege reserved for "True Believers." There was, however, one incident; but I will relate that by-and-bye.

CHAPTER VIII

AFGHAN SURGEONS AND PHYSICIANS

Accidents from machinery in motion. The "dressers of wounds" in Afghanistan. Their methods of treating dislocations, fractures, and wounds, and the awful results of the same. The "Barber surgeons." Tooth drawing and bleeding. The Hindustani "Doctors." "Eye-doctors" and their work. The Hakims or native Physicians. Treatment of disease by the people. Aspect in which European Physicians are viewed by the different Classes.

One morning soon after our arrival in Kabul, when I was at the Erg hospital, a messenger arrived in a great hurry to say a man had been injured at the Workshops. I jumped on my horse, which was waiting, and galloped off. Just outside the Workshop garden, on the road by the river bank, I saw the heavy portable engine with a crowd of people round it. Mr. Pyne was there in the middle of the crowd, and a man, one of the Afghan workmen, was lying on the ground. I examined the patient and found he was dead. Mr. Pyne was very upset and at first refused to believe it. He sent off a man to the shops for whisky, and begged me to send someone to the hospital for ammonia. I did so, though, of course, it was useless. They were moving the engine to the Salaam Khana or Durbar Hall to work the dynamo for the electric light there, but no one in the crowd seemed to have seen how the accident occurred, whether the man was crushed under the wheel or whether he had been struck on the head. There was no inquest, and

post mortem examinations were not viewed with favour.

Later on, when the machinery was put together and some of it was in working order, accidents and deaths were, as might be expected, of frequent occurrence. In stepping over the shafting which ran across the entrance to one of the shops, about a foot above the ground, the long sheepskin postîn or coat would catch, and the wearer be whirled round and killed. Familiarity breeds contempt, and in spite of accidents it took a long time to educate the ordinary Afghan, after he had got over his first awe, up to the point of learning that machinery in motion should be approached with circumspection.

They had a way of putting their fingers under the punches of the cartridge machines, forgetting that the punch would inevitably come down at its appointed moment. It took one man in the palm, I remember, and I had to amputate his first and second finger and his thumb. Another got his hand between some steel rollers in motion, and but for the fact that Mr. Pyne was on the spot and at once threw the machine out of gear, the arm would have gone too. As it was, the skin was taken neatly and cleanly from the wrist and turned backwards like a glove over the finger tips. The bones of the hand were crushed, and I wished to amputate in the lower forearm; but the man, who was brought to the hospital, refused to have the hand taken off because he could move the fingers a little. I pointed out the danger he was running of further serious results, but he would not consent.

As he refused the only treatment that I felt was

suitable, I could not undertake to treat him, and he was removed to his home in the city. I do not know who attended to his hurts, probably one of the native "dressers," but four or five days afterwards he sent a friend to beg that I would come and remove the hand. Unfortunately, it was too late; "tetanus," or lockjaw, had set in.

The "dressers" of wounds in Afghanistan are a body of men—natives—whose duty it is to dress wounds and ulcers, set broken limbs, and probe for bullets. They have no knowledge of even the groundwork of their profession. Never having dissected, nor studied anatomy, they are quite ignorant of the position and shape of the bones, to say nothing of the course and distribution of the larger arteries of the human body, so that the abscess knife and the scalpel put into the hands of one of these men work grievous harm. They carry about with them a flat tin box, with partitions inside, something like a paint box; and in it is a collection of most filthy looking ointments of different colours. These they plaster on indiscriminately; if one does not cure an ulcer perhaps another will. For dislocation of joints a mixture of flour and yolk of eggs smeared on is a certain specific; they have no idea of reducing the dislocation. For a broken bone, flour and yolk of eggs again comes in. Say the bone of one arm is broken between the shoulder and elbow, the following treatment is adopted. Some narrow strips of calico, smeared with the flour and egg mixture, are bound tightly round the limb at the seat of injury; thus breaking the first law of surgery, that no bandage

be put on under a splint. Over this bandage are arranged longitudinally four or five narrow pieces of wood about five inches long, very like those you buy in a bundle for firewood, and utterly useless as splints, and another bandage is wound firmly over these; there is no padding with cotton wool. The patient is then left. The result is, of course, that the limb below the bandages becomes exceedingly swollen and painful.

When the pain has reached such a pitch that it is no longer bearable, the patient releases his arm from the bandages, and the dresser is sent for to readjust them, so that the unfortunate limb is relieved for a time before it is tortured afresh. In spite of the dresser the bone sometimes unites, usually at a more or less obtuse angle; but not uncommonly, especially in compound or comminuted fractures, the pressure is taken off too late, and the whole limb mortifies. The patient, after months of suffering, may or may not recover. I have had them brought to me with the broken end of the bone protruding from a hanging mass of stringy and sloughing muscle and tendon, the rest of the limb being hidden from sight by unclean rags.

Such "dressers" as I could get hold of I put through an examination at the hospital, to try and find out what they knew, and endeavoured to teach them some elementary facts in anatomy and one or two common sense rules in surgery, but only one of them would even pretend to learn, and he was a humbug. They all knew better than I did how to treat wounds and ulcers, and set broken limbs, and they received any suggestions of mine in offended

silence. I showed up one or two, pointing out the disastrous results of their treatment, but it did no good. I only had an extra enemy or two to consider, for they were very venomous.

Besides the comparatively modern "dressers," there is another body of men in Kabul who practise the noble art of surgery, namely, the "barbers." The line they specially take up is that of bleeding and tooth drawing. They have very rough forceps for the latter operation, and when, as not infrequently happened, they snapped the crown of a tooth off instead of extracting it, they passed the patient on to me. It is annoying for a surgeon to have to extract broken but firmly-fixed fangs from an injured and bleeding jaw. It is not a pretty operation at all.

For fevers, dyspepsia, gout, headache, or any feeling of malaise, the barbers bled their patients—but besides these, which may be called the *irregular* bleedings, there are regular bleedings every spring and autumn. These are generally done out of doors by the road side. The barber, squatting down by the side of his patient, makes his incision at the bend of the elbow: fortunately, not into the vein immediately over the great artery of the arm, the one usually bled from in England, but into one adjoining. The patient holds out his arm and allows the blood to drip on to the ground till he thinks enough has run away. There is not the slightest attempt made to measure the quantity of blood lost. The only precaution taken is to avoid drinking any water for twenty-four hours afterwards, lest it should mix with the rest of the blood in the vein and make it thin; or if they do drink any they hold

the wounded arm above their heads to prevent the water running into it! Wet cupping, too, is performed by the barbers and dressers, and is a very popular means among the townsfolk of getting rid of their blood. It is a common thing to see an Afghan scarred all over the shoulders and loins. Cupping is employed generally as a remedy for muscular rheumatism. The custom was introduced some years ago by the Hindustani hospital assistants, who, after having had in India some slight training in the European system of medicine, found their way into Afghanistan under the guise of "doctors." The majority of these were unqualified men, and were quite unfit to be anything but hospital assistants. Let loose upon the people they have worked as much havoc among the sick as a similar number of the hakims could have done.

There are also native "eye doctors!" These may do good sometimes by accident, though I never heard of a case, but they do an incredible amount of harm: for eye diseases, on account of the glare and the dust, the absence of proper treatment and ordinary care, are very common in Afghanistan.[1]

Finding out that I sometimes used sulphate of copper—an astringent and caustic—of which there was plenty to be had in the bazaars, they would put this powdered into any eye—say, of a child who had ulcer of the cornea! The Hindustani hospital assistants were not much wiser, for they sometimes used solutions of sulphate of zinc, a similar remedy, for the same purpose. The eye being irreparably

[1] The commonest affections I met with were granular lids, chronic entropion, corneitis, nyctalopia, and cataract.

damaged the patient is then handed on to me, and the Hindustani, like the dresser, smugly says that "If *he* couldn't cure the patient, neither could the Feringhi."

However, the people and the Amîr judged, I found, according to general results. I remember in Turkestan a soldier getting leave of absence, travelling down to Kabul, and bringing his old mother on a donkey the two hundred odd miles over the mountains, for me to cure her eyes. They were past all hope.[1] The painful part of the affair was that they would not believe I *could* not, but that I *would* not restore her eyes; and the old woman went down on her knees to implore.

There was one old fellow, an "eye doctor," in Kabul, whom I used to notice on my way to the hospital. He sat in a hut of rushes and mud by the roadside, with his medicines in little packets before him. I often wished he would come and have a little elementary instruction in the "eye." But he had such a sour expression when I went by, and he never would look at me, that I did not suggest it to him.

The hakims—the physicians of Afghanistan—practise purely as physicians; they do not use the knife surgically, rarely even for bleeding. When they find it necessary to treat an abscess, they apply an irritating ointment which causes ulceration of the skin. Since the introduction of European drugs into Afghanistan some of the hakims have made use of them; but as they do so in ignorance of their therapeutic properties, the results are rarely

[1] Entropion, with nebulous and vascular cornea, in an old woman of seventy.

satisfactory, and, in some cases, are disastrous. They have great faith in the healing properties of a purge, but do not consider it has had any effect unless it acts at least twenty times. The way is prepared by administering every day for a week a large bowl of laxative mixture; afterwards, one or more bowls of a drastic purge are given. Some of the people seem to establish toleration of this class of medicine, and require a large dose before they are acted on; but with a vast number this mode of treatment, combined with the custom of eating largely of ripe and semi-ripe fruit, certainly predisposes them to the obstinate and often fatal bowel affections that are such a scourge in the spring and autumn.

These bowel troubles, according to a popular native idea, are caused by drinking tea immediately after having eaten fruit, particularly mulberries. There is no doubt, however, that some of the cases are due to the debilitated and enfeebled state of the digestive organs, produced by the malarial poison, the immediate exciting cause often being the sudden change in temperature experienced when climbing a mountain after a residence in the hot valleys. Other cases are due to the presence of minute intestinal parasites, the ova of these being ingested during the drinking of impure water, a common custom among the careless Afghans.

The hakims practise, I was informed, according to the Yunani or ancient Greek system of medicine. The only books I could obtain on this system were written in Arabic, and this was an obstacle to my studying them; but, whatever the teaching of their books may be, the hakims I found knew nothing

whatever about anatomy, physiology, or pathology. Their treatment of disease is entirely empirical. They act according to "authority." Studying disease, not in the living subject, but in their books only, they have made no progress whatever upon the teaching of their ancestors. A sick man is brought to them, and some prominent symptom forces itself upon their notice. This is at once diagnosed as the disease. For instance, pain in the abdomen is to them "colic." It is described in their books, and a certain line of treatment is directed. They do not examine their patient, or attempt to find a cause for his pain; nor do they differentiate between different forms of colic, for they have not noticed that pain in the abdomen is sometimes unconnected with the bowel. As an example, Perwana Khan, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief in Kabul ("Dipti Supersala"), was for some weeks attended by the hakims, who, reporting him to be suffering from colic, administered purge after purge. As, however, he did not seem to be getting any better, the Amîr desired me to examine him. I found he had acute pain in the left loin, shooting downwards; the attacks of pain came on, he said, after he had been riding on horseback, and he had other symptoms, all pointing unmistakably to stone in the kidney. I administered suitable medicine for the relief of the pain, and he was overjoyed, imagining himself cured. I explained, however, to His Highness what was wrong.

To the hakims dropsy is a disease, and can be cured by the treatment set forth in their books. No attempt is made to discover the cause of the dropsy —whether it is due to kidney disease, heart, liver,

lung, or blood disease—it is simply an accumulation of gas (bâd) in the tissues! In diseases of the chest, they do not, of course, employ auscultation with a stethoscope, nor percussion; and bronchitis, pneumonia, and phthisis are classed together under the name of sûrfa, or cough. This, they say, is due to an accumulation of "slime" (balgham) in the body. In some cases the sûrfa is accompanied by dard i sîna, or pain in the chest, and occasionally blood as well as slime is coughed up: these are recognized as bad cases. I have related the case of the young brigadier in Turkestan, cousin of the Sultana, whom the hakims were treating for sûrfa, and who was dying of an improperly treated pneumonia, which had, eventually, become tubercular. As I did not want to have the credit of killing him, I sent in my report to the Amîr at once. The hakims did not in the least mind my being sent for to their cases, after they had become hopeless; for, like the dressers, they said, "Behold, the Feringhi doctor cannot cure them any more than we."

Malarial fevers are diagnosed as "cold fever" or "hot fever" (tap i larza—tap i gurrum), according to whether there is a shivering stage or not. They are treated by copious bleedings and purgings, and by very low diet. Malarial fever, however, being due to the presence in the blood corpuscles of a microscopic animal, an amœba, the treatment that the hakims adopted was not likely to be very successful. Quinine in sufficient dose destroys this organism, but the hakims would rarely give it, or if, following my plan, they did so, they gave it in doses

so small as to be useless, for they said, "Quinine is *hot*, and, therefore, bad for fever."

What they meant I do not know.

The hakims divide not only malarial fevers into "hot and cold," but they arrange all diseases into these two classes, and I was asked of almost every disease that came under my notice whether it were hot or cold; for instance, whether dyspepsia were hot or cold. The reason for the classification in the case of malarial fevers is obvious enough, but for the other diseases I never was able to find out upon what they founded their conclusions. It certainly was not simply whether the patient had fever or not.

It was particularly embarrassing when the Amîr asked the question, and I once told His Highness that in Europe we did not speak of diseases as being either hot or cold, that it was often impossible to consider them as either one or the other. His Highness was quite indignant at my denying what apparently seemed to him such a self-evident fact, so much so that he doubted if my interpreter had translated what I had said correctly. After that, when I was asked, I told the interpreter to class the disease as hot or cold, according to the custom of the country.

In the distant villages, where there is no hakim, and the priest's amulet has failed to cure, the people either go untreated or treat themselves. A popular mode of treatment for diseases of bones and joints, and also for almost any pain in the chest, abdomen, or back, is the employment of the "actual cautery." A piece of live charcoal is placed against the skin until a deep burn is produced; this is done

in two or three places, the scars, of course, remaining till the end of the patient's life.

Another custom, mostly for diseases accompanied by fever, is to kill a sheep, skin it rapidly, and at once wrap the patient in the hot skin. I do not know that it does any harm. The Amîr himself, when suffering from gout, and when the hakims had failed to relieve him, employed this essentially Afghan mode of treatment for his leg and foot. Afterwards he sent for me.

For wounds, ulcers, or abscesses the villagers bind on either a piece of fresh sheepskin, which they leave on till it stinks, or a piece of an old water bag (mussack), which they soften afresh by soaking. Sometimes they plaster on mud or clay. In the case of ulcers, the fact that they *never* heal under these circumstances does not seem to strike the Afghans, and they continue in the old custom. If the discharge oozes from under the clay they plaster on a little more. Cover a sore, get it out of sight, is the golden rule of hakims, dressers, and people. The condition of the ulcer when the clay is removed is indescribable. In some cases the only possible treatment is the removal of the limb.

I noticed that the richer and more educated Afghans did not seem so ready to avail themselves of European medical aid as the poorer people, and it struck me there were two reasons for this. First, that the hakims took the trouble to explain to the richer people, from whom they expected to receive fees, that Europeans use deadly poisons in their medicines, which are just as likely to kill as to cure. A certain amount of weight attaches to this by the often

unfortunate results of medical treatment by the Hindustani hospital assistants. The other reason seems to be due, not to the hakims, but to the influence of the priests. The more religious of the Afghans apparently look upon a European as one who, by the help of the Powers of Evil, has in this world the gifts of knowledge, skill, and wealth, but who in the next life must inevitably be consigned to eternal torment. Doubtless with his deadly poisons he can cure diseases if he wish, but it is not wise, and, indeed, is scarcely lawful, for a sick man to make use of him.

They feel it will offend God less if, before they traffic with the evil one by employing a Feringhi doctor, they use all lawful and right means to become well, such as trying the efficacy of prayer, or the wearing of amulets and charms : should these fail, by placing themselves under the care of their hereditary physicians, the hakims, who attended their fathers and their fathers' fathers. They can always call in the Feringhi as a last resource.

The peasants and the hillmen, the soldiers and the poorer townsfolk—in fact, all those who are but occasionally under the influence of the priests, and from whom the hakims can expect a small, if any fee —these are ready enough to trust themselves, when sick, to European medical skill. They take advantage of that which seems to them good, as an animal might, without entering upon the deeper question whether it is religiously right or wrong—in fact, they even look upon a doctor as one to be classed with Dewanas or madmen, and prophets, who are all more or less sacred.

It must be a powerful reason, such as the fear of being poisoned or damned, that prevents the richer Afghans from employing European medical aid; for they have to pay the hakims, whereas at the hospital no fees or presents were received, and it is not the nature of an Afghan to pay for a thing if he can get it for nothing.

CHAPTER IX

THE MARCH TO TURKESTAN

Jealousy and its results. Sport among the Afghans. The Prince hawking. The "Sportsmen" among the mountains. Wild-fowl shooting. Order to join the Amîr in Turkestan. Preparations. The start. Camp at Chiltan. The Banquet. The Nautch dance. Salaams by the Villagers. Among the Hindu Kush Mountains. The camp in the Hazara country. The dismal night. Courtesy of Jan Mahomed. The hungry morning. Mountain paths. Iron spring. The underground river and the Amîr's offer. The Red mountain and the Deserted City. Camp in the Valley of Bamian. The English prisoners of 1837. The Petrified Dragon. The Colossal Idols: their construction and probable origin. The Cave-dwellers. The Pass of the "Tooth-Breaker." Ghuzniguk. Story of Ishak's rebellion. Fording the River. Tash Kurghán: the Shave and the Hospital. "The Valley of Death." The Plains of Turkestan and the heat thereof. The Mirage. Arrival at Mazar. The House. Story of the Death of Amîr Shere Ali.

About a month after our arrival in Kabul an incident occurred which, though gruesome in its details, I cannot refrain from relating on account of the light which it throws upon the nature of the Afghan.

One of the soldiers had made a favourite of a boy in the town. Some time afterwards the boy was seen to associate with another man in the cantonment. At once the jealousy of the soldier was aroused. He taxed the boy with it, and in a moment of jealous anger he drove his knife into him, killing him instantly.

Forthwith the mother of the lad appealed to Prince Habibullah for justice and revenge. She claimed the

life of the murderer. The Prince heard the case in detail, and, according to the Afghan law (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth), granted the woman's request. The soldier was hurried off to the execution ground, close to the hospital where I was. His hands were fastened behind him, and he was tied in a sitting posture in a chair. A knife was handed to the woman : she seized the man's beard, wrenched his head back, and with a cry of "Allah, akbar," cut his throat. Then, flinging down the knife, she plunged her hands into the spirting stream, and lapped the blood into her mouth.

On Friday, the Mahomedan Sabbath, there being no work in the workshops, Mr. Pyne and I went for a ride along the beautiful lanes fringed with poplars, which lie between the fields around Kabul.

We saw in a large field among the young green corn some seven or eight horsemen sitting silently on their horses. Presently I recognized the slender form of Prince Nasrullah. We rode up to salute His Highness, and he informed us he was hawking for partridges. The bird used was, I believe, a species of falcon, though I am not sufficiently skilled an ornithologist to say what species. The bird is carried, hooded, on the wrist, and is unhooded and cast off when the prey is sighted. For large game the bigger female falcon is used.

The group of riders made quite a picture as they sat : the gold embroidery of their military uniforms sparkling in the sun ; the black of the astrakhan hat, the long waving mane and tail of the horses, all sharply distinct against the background of soft spring green and distant shadowy mountains.

As a nation the Afghans are fond of sport. Game of many kinds is plentiful in the country. A short time ago, the sport of all sports—for the excitement of great possible gain came in—was the picking off of unwary travellers and annexing their belongings. Here was not only sport but the indulgence of a passion so dear to the Afghan, that of gambling.

A sportsman on the hills saw trudging along the road a traveller with a burden on his shoulders. From the distance he examined him with care.

"To my eye this traveller has rupees and much gold in his pack. Without doubt he is a rascal Hindu usurer, who journeying to Kabul, is about to plunder the Faithful. Soul of my father! shall this be?" and the bullet sped on its way. Springing from rock to rock, with agility born of a mountain life, the sportsman was soon on the road. Quickly he opened the pack and—out rolled a melon.

His arms sunk to his sides, his head drooped, and he stood the picture of despair. For his sins he was thus punished. "Tobah! tobah! alas and alas!" he groaned; "my cartridge, my good cartridge is gone, wasted, for ever lost; and I, what have I? a melon! Wai! wai!" and he wept.

But nowadays, since the great king, Amîr Abdurrahman, has occupied the throne, this form of sport is less popular than it was. Possibly it may be due to the fact that consequences far from pleasing to the sportsmen and their friends are apt to follow indulgence in this pastime. Imprisonment has occurred; the being compelled to work in chains on the roads or in the workshops; ignominious death

even, as by hanging, or by being thrust into an iron cage and left thirsting on the high peak of a mountain. So, therefore, as I said, it is becoming less popular.

There are, however, many other forms of sport. Wild-fowl shooting in the marshes around Kabul is a favourite pastime.

Sometimes the sportsmen go in a body on horseback, ride into the marsh where it is shallow, disturb the duck and fire into the flight. Sometimes they go singly, conceal themselves and use a decoy. In the plains they stalk the deer or use a body of beaters to drive the game to certain points. In Turkestan, tiger, wild pig—which they shoot—and bear are to be obtained. Duck shooting in the autumn and winter, and hawking in the spring are, perhaps, the sports in which the Royal Family most frequently indulge.

Not very long after our arrival in Kabul it was rumoured that the Amîr needed my services in Turkestan, and a month and a half afterwards the official order arrived. I was to accompany Jan Mahomed Khan, the Treasury Officer, who was about to convey a supply of bullion to Turkestan for the use of His Highness. Accordingly, as soon as I received the order, I engaged some servants: a Peshawuri—the "assassin," whom I have already referred to—as valet, and a Hindustani cook, whom I found in Kabul. I was fortunate in being able to obtain a cook, as hitherto Mr. Pyne and I had shared one between us. The man I engaged had been cook in the family of Sir Louis Cavagnari. The other servants were Afghans. After some extra cooking pots, dried fruit, salt, and various other things, which

the cook said he must get from the bazaar, were obtained, and the baggage was packed, Mr. Pyne accompanied me to the house of Jan Mahomed Khan. We were received in a large room, which was crowded with people standing. We seated ourselves at the end and drank tea with Jan Mahomed. Then a bottle of champagne was opened, complimentary speeches made, and, finally, about midday we started. We stopped at the Palace, dismounted, and went in to take leave of His Highness the Prince. When we remounted we were met outside the Palace by Perwana Khan, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and Naib Mir Sultan, the Governor of Kabul, each with their attendants, so that with our own crowd of servants, and a guard of sixty soldiers, we made a large cavalcade. A crowd of people on foot accompanied us part of the way, running by the side and in front of the horses. The sun shone brightly; the dresses of the officials—crimson, and purple, and green—were brilliant with gold embroidery. The glitter of the gold and silver ornaments on belt, scabbard, and bridle, the blue and gold turbans of the attendants, the black sheepskin busbies of the soldiers, horses caracoling, and the look of bustle and excitement, made an artistic and interesting picture.

We rode by the bank of the Kabul river westward, past the workshops and through the gorge between the Sher Durwaza and Asmai mountains out into the Charhardeh valley.

The first day's journey was short, for we went only a few miles across the valley to a place called Chiltan, where on a hill Jan Mahomed has a "country residence." The house was pretty, and well built,

in the style of a bungalow with a verandah ; around it were flower gardens with a small fountain. Down the hill and around the foot of it were vines and fruit trees, and the view from the house was over the cornfields and vineyards of the beautiful Charhardeh valley, circled with mountains.

The Governor of Kabul did not accompany us to the house, but the rest of us sat down to dinner together, in the Mahomedan fashion, that is, on the ground. Pyne and I were accommodated with cushions. As we were not able to double our legs up in the Eastern fashion we "reclined." It was my first "native" dinner, and I enjoyed it immensely, for the ride and excitement had made us hungry. With the fruit, champagne was brought, and afterwards sweets and tea. Then when we lit our cigars nautch girls and musicians were introduced.

I can speak of the wild barbaric music from seithar, rubarb, and drum ; of the passionate Oriental love song pealing forth in unison from strong male voices ; of the unveiled girl dancers undulating to the music ; of the glances cast by the dark eyes, the waving of arms, the clinking of bangles, and the tinkling of bells on their ankles, as the dancers stepped daintily on the carpet.

I can also speak of the indescribable ear-splitting din, without either time or tune, which was torn from the tortured instruments and hurled at us as "music ;" of the harsh voices roaring till they were hoarse something which we did not understand ; of the attempts of the singers to produce a trill by shaking the head ; of the utter absence of modulation or feeling in their singing ; of the dancing women

shuffling about, clapping their hands and throwing themselves into uncouth and to us unmeaning postures; and I thought, "Oh, for an hour of Augustus Druriolanus to open the eyes of these Easterns."

We turned in at midnight, Pyne and I sharing a room, and he broke my only egg cup with his heel. We started next morning at eight, said good-bye to Pyne, who returned to Kabul to superintend the workshops, and then rode on. On the way villagers came out and lined the road to salaam Jan Mahomed and offer him presents. As they stood in a row they held out their hands, palm upwards, muttered a prayer, and stroked their beards—that is, those who had beards: the young men and boys who had not, pretended to do so. At some places they slung a string across the road with a Koran fixed in the middle of it, and as we passed under it we held out our hands, palm upwards, muttered a prayer, and stroked our beards. At other places they killed a bullock or a calf by cutting its throat. I do not know the significance of the operation.

It rained somewhat when we got among the mountains, and Jan Mahomed, who had on a purple velvet tunic, put up an umbrella to protect himself. I found he had brought his little son, four years old, with him. The youngster was seated in a little chair, which was securely fastened on the back of a steady horse, an attendant holding a leading rein. I was not on very good terms myself with my horse. He was a very showy creature, and had been given me by the Prince, but he had evidently not been ridden lately, and was very fresh. A march is a

fatiguing function at the best of times, and my horse was not up to the quick shuffling walk which is so restful. He would do anything else—buck, kick, gallop, or trot. Finally Jan Mahomed ordered one of the soldiers, an iron Afghan, to change with me, and I was at peace again.

Sometimes we stopped at a village and put up in the different houses; other times the tents were pitched near a stream. When we got among the Paghman offshoot of the Hindu Kush mountains we had pelting rain and sleet for hours; a violent storm of thunder and lightning; then had to ford a wide roaring stream with a stony irregular bed, and, finally, to camp outside a Hazara fortified village in the sloppy melting snow.

The village (Kharzar) was too filthy inside for us to enter, and too cramped in space to accommodate us, if we had entered. I went to look—for my tent had not arrived. For food the villagers were too ill provided themselves to be able to sell us anything, and hungry, wet, and tired, it seemed likely we should have a cheerless night. When Jan Mahomed's tent was ready he kindly invited me to enter it. I took off my soaked ulster, sloshed and slipped into the dusk of the tent, sat on a stool, and shivered miserably. Nothing else seeming to be forthcoming, a pipe was the only resource, and with shaking hand I tried to light it. Match after match fizzed in the damp and went out. The pipe chattered in my teeth, and, woe is me, I felt that the cold and the wet and the hungry emptiness would last for ever. But it did not. Jan Mahomed Khan noticed presently that I seemed

uncomfortable. He rose from the camp stool on which he was sitting enveloped in the voluminous folds of a huge sheepskin postîn, came across the tent, slipped the postîn from his shoulders and threw it around me. I tried to refuse; but he insisted. He said nothing, for he could not speak English nor I Persian, then he smiled, bowed and sat down again. I felt very grateful, and at the same time rather ashamed at having robbed him, but presently a soldier brought him a cloak in which he wrapped himself.

Meanwhile, the attendants, having succeeded in obtaining some straw, scattered it thickly inside the tent and spread carpets over it. Then they endeavoured to light a fire in a large iron pot outside, and when there was a feeble glimmer of a flame they brought it in. We gathered round it joyfully, but soon a dense fog of smoke from the damp wood filled the tent. Though I still shivered under the postîn, I had managed to light my pipe, and I sat puffing away with the smarting tears trickling down; finally the smoke fog became so dense that I was compelled to sit with my eyes shut. Neither Jan Mahomed nor any of the Afghans seemed to mind it in the least. Jan Mahomed himself is not an Afghan. He is a Samarcandi whom the Amîr purchased as a boy. He was the Amîr's faithful attendant when in exile in Russian Turkestan; and when His Highness came to the throne Jan Mahomed was put into a position of trust, finally becoming treasury officer, or "Chancellor of the Exchequer."

The tent, by and by, became warmer, and I took off my solar helmet which I had worn during the

rain storms. The Afghans, however, attach great importance to keeping the head warm, and they all insisted upon my putting on that or some other head covering at once; otherwise, they said, I should take fever. The fire began to blaze up brightly and the smoke to disappear, when an iron vessel was brought, containing a few pints of milk with water added to eke out the quantity. They put it over the fire and, when it boiled, a handful of tea was thrown in. There was enough for all in the tent to have a teacupful; I, the guest, and Jan Mahomed, received two each. By and by, an iron camp bedstead was prepared for my host, and he retired; one of the attendants kneading and massaging the limbs till he slept. My bedding not having turned up I threw a buffalo rug over my feet, and lay down on the carpet enveloped in the folds of the sheepskin. It was not a comfortable bed, but I was tired and slept more or less, waking up occasionally with aching bones.

The morning was bright: the rising sun in the clear sky lit up the white snow all around, and a keen wind was blowing. My interpreter, the Armenian, appeared. He said he had had fever in the night, and had found shelter in one of the huts inside the Hazara fort. He brought me a small piece of dry bread which the cook had found among the baggage when my tent arrived. Some hot tea was made, and I munched my crust with great satisfaction. They told me we should have a cold march that day, by Hajiguk, and the Armenian said:—

"Sir, you not wear the long coat; he is wet, and fever come for you."

"I must wear something," I said.

"Another you have," said he, and off he went. He presently returned with my dressing-gown. I objected; but, no, there was nothing extraordinary in it; in fact, it was very like an Afghan robe. I wore it, therefore, though it did not seem a very suitable riding coat.

It was a cold march as we crunched along through the snow, in spite of the fact that the sun was shining brightly. We were at an altitude of over sixteen thousand feet, and had to make long detours, for the road was in places blocked or rendered unsafe by the snow. In some of the detours where there was no path, we scrambled up and down terrifying slopes. My saddle, a hunting one, could not be kept in place, and we had to extemporize a breast-plate with string. In one ravine where we halted, trying to find a way out, there was a sudden crack and a splash. We had stopped over a stream crusted with ice and covered with snow, and the horse of one of the soldiers went through. The stream, however, was shallow, and only the man's feet were wetted. There was a laugh as he urged his horse out.

We descended from the region of snow into valleys where the air quivered with heat, and one's face was nearly blistered. In one, where we stopped for lunch, I put a clinical thermometer for a moment against my coat sleeve. The mercury shot up to the top at once. I was glad when we moved on again. We passed a spring bubbling up near the road, whose waters were impregnated with iron, the ground all round being stained brown. Jan

Mahomed said the water contained copper and was poisonous.

I remember one narrow but wild rocky ravine, with a river foaming and roaring down it. The road ran along a few yards above the water. There was a natural bridge of rock, over which the road ran, and just beyond, a waterfall of some depth, where, at the bottom of the fall, the water rushed under an arch of rock and was lost to sight. It reappeared, I was told, in a valley about two miles off, and they said His Highness the Amîr one day, when travelling by, offered a prize of a hundred rupees to the man who would plunge in and explore the underground river. A duck had been put in and had reappeared alive in the valley. A soldier undertook the adventure at once, and was preparing for his perilous journey when the Amîr forbad it. His Highness said, "If he is drowned I lose a man of courage, and if he succeed what gain is there? Give him the rupees."

We were now about ninety miles from Kabul. For the first forty miles we travelled due west, after that north-west, till we entered the ravine I spoke of, which led nearly due north. As we rode on, the ravine descended and opened into a large and very fertile valley. The mountain at the west of the gorge was red in colour, quite different from those we had been travelling among. Looking up with some interest at it, I distinguished battlemented walls and towers leading up the mountain, and, at the top, clusters of ruined houses and walls. There was no sign of life. The city was deserted. They told me the place was called Zohâk-i-Marhan,

and was built a thousand years ago ("hazar sol") by the Emperor Alexander ("Sekunder").

I did not, however, in the style of architecture see anything that could lead one to suppose the buildings were of Greek origin. It is interesting to note that there is in Afghanistan a tribe called Zohàk, which is a division of the Ushturyani (the Stauri of Pliny), who formerly occupied the district west of Bamian. Zohàk is stated by Dr. Bellew to be the same as Zàk and Sàk, and stands for the ancient inhabitants of Sistàn and Makràn, Assyrian subjects of Nimrod, king of Babylon.

We descended into the valley and camped not far from the red mountain, near the village of Topchi.

It was the month of May, the sun shone brightly, and the fields around were green. Jan Mahomed had brought the musicians—but not the dancing girls —with him. We luxuriated after the bitter winds and sleet of the mountains, and the heat and weariness of the stony valleys. When lunch was over Jan Mahomed sent me some sweets and a bottle of champagne. I found that my servants, though Mahomedans, felt they were justified after their fatigues in finishing the bottle. The musicians sat playing in Jan Mahomed's tent, and as I lay in mine reading a novel, the quaint music, softened by the distance, was more pleasing than I had supposed possible. For years afterwards the twang of the rubarb, the irregular thud of the drums, and the monotonous sound of the singing, brought back

vividly to me that day in the Bamian valley, when I was a new comer in the country.

The Bamian valley extends from Topchi nearly ten miles in a westerly direction, and is about eight thousand feet above the sea. It is interesting to know that Lady Sale, Lady MacNaughten, and six other English ladies, who were taken prisoners in the first Afghan war in 1837, were conducted over the road we traversed to this very valley. Lady Sale, relating their adventures, says that though they suffered hardship, privation, and much anxiety concerning their future fate, they were treated with kindness and consideration by the villagers on the way. The order was that they were to be conducted to Khulum, a hundred and twenty miles further on among the mountains toward Turkestan, there to be delivered over to the Governor. This would have meant to them a hopeless captivity. Happily, Sir Robert Sale, after the defeat of the Afghans by Pollock, hurried on, and was able to rescue the party in Bamian. Lady MacNaughten, less happy than Lady Sale, had seen her husband, diplomatist and Oriental scholar, murdered before her eyes in Kabul.

While we were in this valley Jan Mahomed went some miles out of the road to show me a petrified dragon, or, as my interpreter put it, "a stone cow." Akbar Mahomed had slain this dragon in single combat, and Allah had changed it into stone. "Why *cow?*" I asked the Armenian, some time afterwards. "It is a snake or a dragon."

"I not know English word snake and dragon; I must say some animal, and 'cow' came into head,

therefore I say *cow*." The dragon I found to be a curious shaped rocky hill formed in the course of ages by the deposit of carbonate of lime from a spring that was still bubbling there.

This valley was full of surprises, for the next day we came up with three colossal figures, cut in relief on the face of the mountains (the Hindu Kush range) on the north side of the valley. These figures, they said, were statues carved by order of Jelaluddin Shah, of himself, his wife and son (Jelaluddin lived about the year 1230). Away on the other side of the valley we could dimly see on the heights the ruins of a deserted city—"the city of Jelaluddin." We were too far off to see anything characteristic in the ruins, but it is possible that the city belongs to the same era as that of Zohàk-i-Marhan, a few miles further down the valley. The figures, it is probable, are of Buddhist origin, and date back to the time which preceded the Mahomedan conquest of Afghanistan, when Buddhism was the dominant religion of the country. The largest of the three figures, which has the local name of "Sa-mama," is 173 feet in height. The smaller, "Sul-sol," 120 feet, and the smallest not more than 80 feet. They resemble in style other figures of Buddha. The drapery, moulded and fastened on with pegs, shows no sign of classical influence, arranged, as it is, in stiff conventional folds. These are in places broken away, showing the peg holes. To give an idea of their relative size, I saw a man on horseback ride up to one figure—he and his horse together were not so high as the toe. The figures are hollow, and there are steps leading up to chambers inside the body and

head. These are used by the Amîr as storehouses for grain. On the wall of the chamber, in the head of the largest figure, are the indistinct marks of a fresco painting, of which Mr. Collins, the geologist, managed, some years afterwards, to get an imperfect photograph. It is, however, impossible to make out the subject, and I heard no story as to when or by whom it was painted. In the face of the mountain, by the side of the figures, are chambers or caves hollowed out of the rock. Some of these are beautifully cut, with domed roofs—to use the words of Mr. Collins, who examined them—in "hard conglomerate rock, and are coated with a layer of lustrous bitumen." Doubtless, they were used as temples and dwelling-places for the Buddhist priests. Many of the other caves are in "soft sandstone and conglomerate." These could be easily cut, the hard conglomerate forming a natural roof for rooms dug in the softer sandstone beneath. Presumably they are of later origin than those cut in the harder material. Narrow, almost impossible staircases lead up to the caves, and there dwell the poorer Hazara agriculturists of the Bamian valley. There are cave-dwellers in many parts of Afghanistan, and it is men of this kind, who combine the professions of agriculturist and warrior, who would be likely to cause more trouble to an invader of Afghanistan than would the regular army of the Amîr. During the last Afghan war the English were at first much puzzled by the rapidity with which thousands of armed men would appear, and, if occasion required, the equal rapidity with which they would vanish. All that could be found was here and there a peaceful peasant hard at work

in the fields with his mattock—the rifle was left at home.

The furniture of one of these rock dwellings is simple enough. The most prominent feature is the great ornamented earthen jar, in which grain and provisions are stored: a strip of carpet occupies the place of honour in the centre of the floor: a few copper cooking utensils, a "chillim," an Afghan "samovar" for tea, and a rough "charpoy," complete the establishment.

In the Bamian valley, fertile, full of interest and with a delightful climate, we travelled deliberately, taking two days to traverse the ten miles or so. As we rode, my Armenian told me many stories. I do not know what they were about; I didn't then. One only I understood. He said that once on a march, utterly wearied, he went to sleep on horseback. "It is thrown out," said he, meaning himself; and pointing to his forehead, with a mild smile, he said, "he is broke, and blood is come." I laughed, and asked what happened next. "I got him upstairs horse, but I not go to sleep again."

Then we turned north, and the next day was wearisome: not so much from the length of the march, it was only thirty miles, as from the incessant climbing. We had a mountain to cross, to which all that we had hitherto seen was a mere joke. The Afghans call the mountain the "Tooth-breaker" (Dandan shikan). I don't mind trifling adventures, such as riding along the tops of walls, or foot-wide bridges, but when it comes to riding an iron-shod horse along smooth rock, slanting to a precipice of unknown depth—well, it is past a joke. We had to do it, and then descend a horrible "zig-zag." I

don't call it a path, because the predominant features were boulders, smooth tilted slabs, and rolling pebbles. You lean back in the saddle, leaving your horse to make his own arrangements. He picks his way warily, lower and lower, and you thank Heaven you have got so far, when, just as you reach the end of one "zig," and your horse's nose is over the edge, there is a crunching slip of his hind feet: you catch in your breath and—think. But he does not make a plunge over the edge, he pivots round on his four feet, and goes down the "zag." This is repeated frequently, and at last, after many years, you arrive with your nerves in a shattered condition at the bottom. The next time I came over this road, a year or two later, there were accidents; but that I will speak of later.

We travelled on, day after day, through valleys and over mountains—sometimes putting up at villages, sometimes camping in our tents. Rain and hail alternated with scorching heat. To blacken you properly, you want a dry scorching heat, alternating with icy winds and hail. Some of the soldiers looked exactly as if they had been smoked: the eyelids and creases of the face being white—the rest black.

We often had music when we camped, and one evening I played chess with Jan Mahomed. He beat me. We were then at Ghuzni guk, the valley where the armies of the Amîr and of his cousin Sirdar Ishak Khan met and fought. The story I heard was this: His Highness the Amîr and Ishak had always been friends, and when the Amîr ascended the throne, Ishak was made Governor of the Turkestan provinces. All went well for some years.

Suddenly, news arrived in Turkestan that His Highness had had an attack of gout, and had succumbed.[1] Ishak called his officers around him, and discussed what steps to take. The chiefs urged him to seize the throne. He, however, was a nervous man, not a warrior by nature, and he hesitated. The chiefs seeing this, broadly hinted that unless he seized the moment while he could, they would place another on the throne, and Ishak, much against his will, was constrained to do as they wished. He sent his women-folk and children across the Oxus into Russian Turkestan, and marched with his troops and chiefs for Kabul. They had not advanced many days' journey when news was brought that the Amîr was very much alive, and that his army was marching under Gholam Hyder, the less, to meet them. Ishak knew now that he must meet his Great Cousin, and in fear and distrust he posted relays of horses, so that, if the worst came, he could escape across the frontier. They met in this valley a few miles beyond Kamard. It is said that Ishak's army at the outset had the best of it—the men knew they were fighting for their lives—but Ishak, neither Mahomedan nor Christian, did not wait to see the end of the day. He made use of his horses, and rapidly escaping across the frontier into Russia, he left his unfortunate followers to bear the brunt of the Amîr's terrible vengeance. It appears that the rumour of the Amîr's death had some foundation : His Highness had been seized with a sudden attack of syncope, in which he fell insensible to the ground.

[1] The news reached India. It was the first thing I saw in the papers when I arrived there to enter the Amîr's service, Sept. 1888.

One Sunday we had a very long march, thirteen hours, with two rests of an hour each. Going one pace all the time is tedious, and one's bones ache abominably. We got into a ravine with a rapid stream roaring along it, and part of the path was undermined and slipping. We had to dismount and skip across on foot, the soldiers getting the horses over.

The ravine narrowed, curved to the right, and opened out into a valley. The river roared round the corner, figure S shape, in some places cutting away the path completely. Our horses had to plunge, and stumble, and splash through that river three times in twenty yards, before we could get out into the valley. It is at times like this that the beautiful song, "One More River to Cross" becomes full of meaning. A mile or two more of hill and vale, and soon after dark we reached "Tash Kurghán," or "Khulum," the place where Lady Sale and her companions in captivity were to have been taken.

We put up at the citadel or fort, which is built on a rocky hill in the middle of the town. We rested here all day Monday, and I enjoyed the luxury of a hot bath. The Armenian waxed philosophical. He said, "It is good to rest a little. Tired is go away, and hungry is go away." Also he suggested that a shave might commend itself to my judgment.

"But who is to shave me?" I said.

"There is bolber in the town." He called it barber afterwards. They fetched the barber, and I wondered if it were dangerous for him to shave me, for I had heard that Afghans were treacherous fanatics. He did not destroy me. He merely rubbed

some oil on my chin and then scraped the skin off with a knife—a painful process. When the operation was completed, I was conducted to the hospital. No, not on account of my chin, but to examine the patients. The hospital was an ordinary but rather large dwelling-house, and there were many wounded soldiers lying there. It was exceedingly unclean and smelt badly. The patients—I never before in my life saw such a condition of things. The ghastly state to which battle wounds can come from neglect and improper treatment, is too awful for words. I wanted to move the men from the house, and to amputate at once some half-dozen arms and legs that were *worse* than useless to their owners. I could not, for I had neither knives nor chloroform, and I had to leave the men—to leave them as I found them—with their wistful eyes on me.

After that Jan Mahomed took me out to dine at a local magnate's house. My cook accompanied me, bearing knife, fork, spoon, and plate. In the absence of table and chair I had to kneel to use my knife and fork. It was not a comfortable dinner. I could not understand what the conversation was about; and there were those men at the hospital ever before me.

Beyond Tash Kurghán we turned west, and the scenery completely changed. For some miles there was undulating plain covered with coarse grass. As we rode on we started a herd of antelope, and had a gallop after them: the change of motion from the everlasting walk was a great rest to the muscles.

In one place the road dipped down between some low clay hills, the defile of Abadu. Until very recently this little grip had had the credit of being

exceedingly dangerous ; in fact, it is even yet called "the Valley of Death" : this on account of the caravan thieves and robbers who infested the neighbourhood.

It is less dangerous under the present Amîr, for I had occasion while in Turkestan to send for two additional dispensers from Kabul, and these two men rode the whole distance from Kabul to Mazar unattended. They had for safety's sake a revolver. It was, however, unloaded, and they had no powder.

The plains became gradually flatter and more dusty, till, finally, it was little more than a desert with the scantiest vegetation.

The heat was intense, and the glare from the white dust most wearying. Away in the distance in front of us, I saw a lake with some trees round it, and I longed for the time when we should arrive and get cool again in the shade. "There is no lake there," they said. Nonsense! I knew there was. This was no "mirage." I mean, you could see the thing. There weren't any towers or castles, or people walking upside down, simply one or two trees near some water. But, alas! we dragged on and on in the parching heat, and never got nearer the lake. We passed a camel, dead, by the roadside, loading the hot air with foulness. The gorged vultures only hopped lazily a little way off, and sat and stared at us. We halted at last, dismounted, and sat in the sun while the "chillim" bearer blew up his charcoal and passed round the pipe. I had a pull at it. He kept a little silver mouthpiece for my especial benefit, which he slipped on the end of the tube. I was glad of this, though I knew it was simply done lest I had eaten pork or

anything unclean. After all had smoked, the pipe charcoal was used to light some sticks that the pipe-bearer had brought with him; the kettle was boiled, and we had hot tea—scalding hot: the hotter it was the more it seemed to satisfy our thirst.

Then we mounted and rode on again. By-and-by, Jan Mahomed politely gave me a handful of English sweets, those round discs like pennies, with a fancy edge, and with words printed on, "For a good boy": they tasted of peppermint. I wished they had been gelatine lozenges. Some hours afterwards we halted again. This time it was at a village on the plain. There were small mud-huts, and quaint-looking domes of wickerwork with bits of scrub tucked into the interstices. It was cool in the shade, and the villagers, Turkomans, gave us lettuces to eat. It was delicious to crunch up the cool crisp leaves. We drank more tea, then rode on again amid the salaams of the Turkomans. At last we came in sight of the trees, the cupola and minarets of the town of Mazár-i-Sherif. This was no phantom scene. A great crowd of people on foot and on horseback came to meet us. I noticed that many of them kissed the hand of Jan Mahomed, those on horseback dismounting to do so.[1] I also noticed that one man running by the side of Jan Mahomed had a rifle slung backwards under his arm, and that the barrel kept persistently in a line with my head. It annoyed me. I could not get out of the way of the brute. I need not

[1] I was very sorry to hear recently, that Jan Mahomed Khan is no longer living: a machine gun exploded and he was killed.

have been disturbed, the gun was not in the least likely to have been loaded : powder was too expensive.

We reached the town at five in the afternoon, rode through the gate along the narrow bazaar to the Palace. We dismounted under some big plane-trees growing by a tank in the outer garden of the Palace, and the report of our arrival was taken to His Highness the Amîr. The pages and other officials crowded round, busily brushed the white dust off us, and brought us bowls of iced water. Thirst ! I knew what it was now ! Ride for ten hours over a dusty plain, with the thermometer over 100° in the shade, and anything you like in the sun, and see.

Word was brought that His Highness would receive us the next day. Jan Mahomed then handed me over to the care of one of the court officials, the "Ferash-Bashi," or "Keeper of the Carpets." This was a short stout gentleman of few words, and with a sour expression.

He was dressed rather gorgeously in a cashmere tunic, gold-bedecked belt, trousers, high boots and turban. When I got to know him better, I thought he was not such a villain as he looked. This gentleman conducted me, accompanied by the Armenian, to a house near the Palace. We passed through a covered porch, guarded by a pair of heavy gates, into a garden surrounded by high walls : went along the stone-paved paths, up some steps into a suite of rooms on the north side of the garden. The rooms were beautifully carpeted, and looked very bright and handsome in the setting sun. The "Bashi" informed us that he had orders to send

dinner from the Amîr's kitchen ; then politely saying "Binishinēd"—take a seat—he departed. Seeing there was no seat to take, I took the floor, and waited hungrily till dinner should arrive. I had not long to wait, and was delighted to see the servants bring a portable chair and table, with the dinner. I don't remember what the different courses were, but the dinner was European—soup, joint, and entrées—and ended with a very delicious ice-pudding and fruit.

This house, which His Highness was kind enough to put at my service, is of interest. Here, His Highness himself lived, before he built the Mazar Palace. Here, too, Sirdar Ishak, in the days when he was Governor of Turkestan, kept the ladies of his harem ; and here Amîr Shere Ali lived—and died—in the very room I was dining in.

Amîr Shere Ali had been friendly with the British : troubles arose, and he turned to the Russians. The British occupied Quetta in 1876, and in 1878 the Amîr received a mission from Russia. A British mission being refused entry into the Kyber, war was proclaimed. I need not trace the outline of the war ; it is enough to say that Amîr Shere Ali did not receive the help he expected from Russia, and he fled to Mazár-i-Sherif. Here he was seized with his old enemy, gout—a disease that is hereditary in this reigning family.[1]

They say that he was being attended by a

[1] There is a saying in Kabul that only those of the family suffer from gout who afterwards occupy the throne ; and since Prince Nasrullah, the second son, has had twinges of pain in one of his lower limbs, some have looked upon him as a probable successor to the throne !

Russian physician, and that the pain being very severe the physician introduced some medicine beneath the skin ; then escaping by night to the Oxus he crossed into Russian territory. In the morning Amîr Shere Ali was found dead. For some days his death was concealed, but finally the fact was betrayed by a serving woman.

At once the soldiers of the regular army commenced looting. The Palace was stripped ; then the bazaars and the wealthier people suffered, and soon there was a pandemonium of riot, robbery, and murder. This having occurred once, the fear is lest it may occur again. Many of the well-to-do natives of Afghanistan have that dread ; and at the time when the present Amîr was severely ill, in 1890, there was such trepidation and anxiety in Kabul, that many of the well-to-do concealed their more portable valuables by burying them in the earth, and sought for safer retreats outside the town, to which they could hurry in time of need.

The house did not differ from those of the richer Kabulis. The windowless twenty-feet-high walls, in addition to ensuring privacy, enabled the occupant on closure of the massive doors to convert his house into a place of defence. It was partly overlooked, however, by one tower or observatory built on the top of a high house some little distance off. It was here, I was informed, that Sirdar Ishak lived. He could, therefore, catch a glimpse of the ladies of his harem when they were walking on the roof.

The large square garden was filled with fruit-trees and flowers : roses, wallflowers, sweet-williams ; and in the centre was a movable wooden platform. In

nearly every garden in Afghanistan you find, in some shady place, generally by the side of the stream that ripples through the garden, a platform a foot or two high, either of wood or carefully smoothed earth. Here the Afghan, in his loose native garb, loves to spread his carpet and sit in the hot summer afternoons lulled by the murmur of the water, lazily talk to his friends and drink unlimited tea. I have done it myself.

On the north side were my rooms raised six steps above the garden. Passing up the steps to the lobby one entered the outer room with its seven arched windows overlooking the garden, its one huge carpet covering the floor, and, passing through, reached the inner room, parallel and of the same size. There were the white sparkling walls ornamented with frieze and dado, the arched niches or takchahs, with small mirrors between them, the fireplace with ornamental mouldings, the draped ceiling and the smooth earth floor with beautiful rugs that are usual in the homes of the wealthiest Afghans. The inner room was lit from the outer by a triple arched window, filled with stained glass, which reached nearly to the floor. It was in this room that Shere Ali died. It is said that on the takchah over the fireplace there was left in the hurry when Ishak fled, the sum of R80,000 in gold. At any rate, while I was there, one of the Court officials was fined heavily by the Amîr for appropriating the money.

The rooms appointed to the interpreter and servants adjoined mine, but were uncarpeted and less elaborately ornamented. On the south side of the garden the rooms were occupied by one of the

chamberlains, Mirza Abdur Rashid. The Mirza was an excellent fellow, and we were friends during my whole stay in Afghanistan. He was a pure-blooded Afghan about my own age, with handsome features, and a skin so dark as to be nearly black. For an Afghan he was well educated, and it was his duty night after night to read aloud to His Highness the records of the kingdom and books translated into Persian, of travel, geography, history, and general information.[1]

On the east of the garden were rooms for the Afghan bath, and on the west a colonnade where I kept my horses and where the soldiers of the guard congregated. Night and day a sentry was on duty in the porch by the big gates.

[1] I have heard recently that the Mirza, following the example of other misguided Afghans, endeavoured to escape from the country into India. Unfortunately for him he was one of the unsuccessful ones. He was seized, brought before the Amîr, and— Fate is now unkind to him.

CHAPTER X

THE AMÎR

To be presented. The Palace gardens. The Palace. The Amîr. The Presentation. Questions asked by His Highness. Another European present. Punishment of Rebellions in Afghanistan. Asiatic motives from European standpoint. Departure of the Captain. Amîr's arrangements for my safety. Bazaars and houses of Mazar. The suburbs. The Military Hospital. The Patients and their condition. The medical attendants. Afghan appreciation of European medical treatment. The daily routine. Insubordination of Hospital assistants. The two chief Hakims. Hindustani intrigue. Amîr's sense of justice. The Trial. A Courtier's influence. Breakfast under the almond trees. The guard of the Amir's table.

On the appointed day I accompanied Jan Mahomed Khan to the Palace to be presented to His Highness the Amîr. Mazar is a much smaller town than Kabul, and as we had so short a distance to go we walked. The bazaar and the streets bear a strong resemblance, in their squalor and narrowness, to those of the larger town ; we, however, were on the outskirts where the roads were wide and the houses at intervals.

We reached the outer garden of the Palace, where we had dismounted on our first arrival in the town, and word was at once taken in to His Highness. After waiting a few minutes the sentry at the gate admitted us, and we entered the inner garden. This appeared to be extensive, and was so filled with almond and other fruit-trees as almost to resemble a wood. Along by the paths were planted

sweet-smelling flowers. There were page boys and other officials walking about, and presently we came in sight of the Palace. In front was a large open space free from trees and flowers, and protected from the sun by a crimson and white awning. This was in place of a "Hall of Audience," where congregate those who have petitions to offer or disputes to settle.

Between the open space and the Palace ran a stream of water about six feet wide, which meandered through the garden. The Palace was small. It resembled in style a bungalow, such as one sees in India. There was a broad and high verandah supported on carved wooden pillars, a high sloping roof, and large windows on each side of the centre door: the one on the left reaching nearly to the ground.

We drew nearer, everyone making way, and we saw, surrounded by pages and courtiers, that remarkable man who, had he lived a century ago, would in all probability have been, not the petty prince of a half-barren country, but the great conqueror of the East—"Amîr Abdurrahman, Amîr of Afghanistan."

He sat, a swarthy heavily-built man, with broad white forehead and piercing eyes; his stooping attitude, with head advanced, showed little of grace, but seemed the personification of watchful strength; as the full-lipped mouth and square jaw betokened the inflexible will.

Almost Persian in type, with the aquiline semi-Jewish features and coal-black hair of his race, he added to the courtesy of the Oriental something of the bluff heartiness of an Englishman.

We had crossed the stream by a foot-bridge, but had paused at a little distance from His Highness. Jan Mahomed receiving a sign, went quickly forward, knelt at the feet of the Amîr, kissed his hand and pressed it to his forehead and eyes; then, rising, he presented me to His Highness.

The Amîr welcomed me to his country, and courteously expressed a hope that I was not fatigued by the long and trying journey. A chair was placed, and His Highness, desiring me to be seated, asked me many questions as to my medical experiences. In particular, he asked what opportunities I had had of studying the disease, Gout—"neqris." I said that in Europe "gout" was called the "English disease," and that as all my professional life had been spent in London, I had had many opportunities of studying and treating this complaint. His Highness then described to me the symptoms that he suffered from, and showed me where the pain seized him. He traced out exactly the course of the sciatic nerve, and I saw that, whatever else he might suffer from, there was no doubt whatever that he had chronic sciatica. He asked also many questions in Science and Natural History, with the object, presumably, of testing one's general knowledge. He did not, however, enquire concerning my Degrees or Diplomas in Medicine, though he well knew of the existence of such things.

His Highness's words were translated by an Interpreter at the Court—a Hindustani who spoke English exceedingly well. I confess I was glad the Armenian was not, at that time, called upon to perform this duty, or I am afraid my answers

would have been less to the point. However, later the Armenian became very fluent, and I learnt to understand him.

Seated some little distance from the Amîr was another European, Captain (now Major) C. L. Griesbach, C.I.E. This gentleman, I heard, had been with the Amîr some two years as Geologist. When my "examination" was satisfactorily over, permission was given us to retire, and I accompanied Captain Griesbach to his house and dined with him. The Captain informed me he was not remaining much longer with the Amîr, but was returning to India to continue his service under the British Government. After dinner he sketched the character of the Amîr, and gave me a good deal of information as to the life in Turkestan. He had heard of the terrible punishment that had been inflicted on the rebel followers of Sirdar Ishak and their unfortunate families. One form of punishment appeared to have been introduced from Russia. Men were described as being tied, in the bitter winter of Turkestan, naked, to a post ; water was thrown over them, and they were left to freeze : a strong man would last two days. Girls had been fastened to the earth and tortured ; women and children sold as slaves —and much more.

I came away in anything but a cheerful state of mind.

By whose orders had these things been done ? I asked myself. Who was responsible for them ? The Prince, whose service I had just entered ? He whom I was to attend in sickness ; to the preservation of whose health I was to devote all my knowledge

and skill? I tried to believe not; that the deeds had been done without his knowledge; that the stories were exaggerated: anything than that they were true; but the horror of it all remained with me long. As the months went by, however, I perceived that to view the conduct of an Asiatic ruler over a turbulent country from the standpoint of Western nineteenth century civilization, is to commit not only an error, but an injustice. It is an error, for it leads one to quite wrong conclusions as to the character of the chief actor: the Amîr was simply proclaiming, in language that Asiatics understand, his determination of being king in Afghanistan. It is an injustice, for education and civilization *cannot* advance with such strides in an isolated Eastern country as in Europe; and without the progress of knowledge the sons cannot learn better than their fathers. Again, the Mahomedan religion—does it uphold forgiveness, long-suffering, pity, and humility, as virtues? On the contrary, it claims an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It tends rather to encourage cruelty, for it spreads its very tenets by slaughter. With what justice, then, could I view these things from our nineteenth century standpoint, seeing that less than two hundred years ago, with *our* religion, similar deeds were committed among us.

A fortnight after my arrival, Captain Griesbach departed for India. He was accompanied by the Interpreter who had translated for me before the Amîr: His Highness had desired the Interpreter to remain in his service, but the man refused.

During the interview when I was presented, His Highness had directed me to take charge of

the military hospital in Mazar. Remembering the men in Tash Kurghân, I wondered what I should see. Early in the morning, I rode off, accompanied only by the Armenian. His Highness had decided that in Turkestan it was unnecessary for me to be followed everywhere by a guard of soldiers. He was my guard, he said, "and the Mazaris are little likely to injure one for whose arrival they have been anxiously watching." One or two precautions he directed the Armenian to take. He was not to conduct me out on the plains more than a mile from the city—this on account of Turkoman highwaymen; nor near a gang of prisoners, for they were dangerous men, and in spite of search carried concealed weapons; nor near a regiment of soldiers with fixed bayonets—for as he significantly put it, "They have attempted even *my* life!"

The way to the hospital was through the narrow, covered bazaar or market-place. This was crowded with people, and caravans of camels and pack-mules from Kabul and Bokhara.

The rough roofing of the bazaar forms a grateful shelter from the scorching sun. The shops are similar to those of Kabul. After the bazaar come winding streets among the houses. Space here is not so limited as in Kabul, and though the streets are no wider, the houses are less lofty. In style they differ much from the Kabul houses; generally, the rooms are square, eight or nine feet high, with a domed brickwork roof. One, two, or more rooms, side by side, for master, servants and horses, constitute the house. Often there are no windows, light being admitted through the door and through

an aperture in the centre of the domed roof. This last acts also, when a wood fire is lighted, as a convenient chimney. The sandali, however, is generally used in the winter. The houses stand in an enclosed yard or garden, but since the domed roofs of the houses are not used for the promenade as are those of Kabul, the garden walls have no need to be more than seven or eight feet high. This style of house is peculiar to Turkestan, though there are, in the suburbs of Mazar, many houses precisely like those of Kabul. The walls, built of sun-dried bricks and coated with mud, become painfully white and glaring in the summer sun.

We reached one of the gates of the town and rode out. Here, in the suburbs, are the summer gardens of the richer men. Far away are the mountains, blue in the distance. Mazar lies on a malarious, almost desert plain in Turkestan, nine miles east of the ancient city Balkh, and thirty miles south of the Pata Kesar ferry, on the Oxus river, so that we were near the Russian frontier.

The plain is desert, because of the absence of water. When the snow melts in the warmth of the spring, the plain becomes a blaze of red flowers, wild tulips—poppies, my Interpreter said: but these shrivel up and die in the summer. The gardens of the town, and the fields immediately around it, are irrigated by an artificial canal, made, I was told, by the Amîr's father during the few months he reigned. They said the water was brought south from the Oxus, but I fancy it must come from the mountains towards Malmul.

The hospital, a short distance out of the town,

was once the suburban house and garden of a wealthy man.

The patients lay in the garden: some were under the trees, others were protected by long thatched roofs supported on poles. None were in the house. In Tash Kurghân the patients with festering wounds were shut in a house when they should have been out in the open. Here they were out in the open, lying on the earth, and dying by scores from malarial fever. They should have been in the house, which was cool, and raised four or five feet above the earth.

There were about three hundred patients when I arrived, most of them down with severe Remittent fever. The Hakims were treating the fever by bleeding, purging, and starvation. Had they left the men untreated some of them might have recovered: as it was, the victims were being carried out five and six a day. In spite of their want of success, the Hakims continued blindly and persistently with their mode of treatment.

I walked round examining the patients and determining what I would do. Evidently it was useless taking the poor fellows who were already drained of their blood by the Hakims. I must take the new comers if I was to succeed in the essential object of medical treatment, that of curing the patient. I therefore directed that all new comers—and they poured into the hospital—should be taken to the inner garden and their beds arranged in the vacant rooms of the house there. A sentry was posted at the gate of the inner garden, with orders to shoot any Hakim attempting to enter.

One room contained a heterogeneous collection of European drugs and surgical instruments. In a small room on the roof lived a Hindustani hospital assistant—the gentlemanly dipsomaniac whom I have already introduced. There were two other Hindustani assistants, but they were utterly and hopelessly ignorant. These men happily had spared the patients. They had done no work at all.

I had, therefore, the first day seven or eight new cases secluded from the rest under my own hands, and, excluding bribery, beyond the reach of Hakims. After some months, when I had become known, I found whom I could trust, and did not take such stringent precautions.

I made a preliminary round of my cases with a note-book, for, at that time, distinguish Mahomed Akbar from Mahomed Hassan, and him from Mahomed Hussain or Gul Mahomed, I could not. I then made a second round with medicines, which were administered before me; for the possibility of bribery occurred to me, and I knew the Hakims would shrink from nothing to bring discredit upon a Feringhi interloper. My wards filled rapidly, and for a week I had no deaths, the fever yielding readily to quinine. The difference in the mortality after European and after native treatment was naturally striking, and the news spread far and wide, especially among the soldiers, the poorer townsfolk and the peasants, so that I soon had far more work before me than I could possibly get through in the day.

The way my time was allotted may be interesting. After a light breakfast I galloped off to the

hospital at daybreak, to escape the intense heat. Having completed my rounds there I returned home about eleven, washed and changed, putting on a dry suit of flannel; then, lying on a couch in the inner room, with all the doors and windows shut to keep out the heat, I munched some of the most delicious fruit—peaches, grapes, and melons—that it has ever been my good fortune to taste. At this time I had not become saturated with malaria, and I could eat fruit without any evil resulting. I slept for an hour, had lunch, and at two o'clock repaired to an underground room, which was comparatively cool, to see the patients, townsfolk, and soldiers who had been gathering in crowds round the house. I continued attending to them till six in the evening and then ceased, whether there were many or few remaining. After dinner I saw the one or two favoured ones who had obtained from the Amîr a special order for me to visit them at their homes.

I had at first some little trouble with the Hindustanis. Work was uncongenial to them. Only one of them, my friend the drunkard, had any medical knowledge, even such preliminary attainment as the use of the stethoscope. Of the other two, one I made a compounder, and the other a dresser of wounds.

Having one day to amputate a thumb, I desired the dresser to remain at the hospital and administer chloroform. He objected, saying he had finished his work for the day. He did not understand English, but spoke in Hindustani, in which language my Armenian was fluent. I said several things, more or less severe, which my interpreter trans-

lated, but the Hindustani went on his way. Had I then been acquainted with Afghan customs I should at once have ordered a soldier to thrash him, but such a procedure would have been unprecedented in a London hospital, and I did not do so. Instead, I wrote to His Highness to enquire if I had authority over the Hindustanis or not. His Highness answered that I had authority over all the Hindustanis and Hakims in the kingdom, with the exception of three men—one Hindustani and the two chief Hakims. He added, that if there were any insubordination I was at liberty to order the offender to be whipped or put in irons.

The Hindustani over whom I had no authority was a qualified man, who had been hospital assistant in the British Army, but who, accused of murdering his superior officer, an Englishman, had escaped into Afghanistan. The Amîr found him a beggar by the wayside and took him into his service, appointing him to attend to the slaves of the harem. He was at the time of which I am writing, in Kabul. The Hakims who were excepted were two old men who had attended the Amîr's father. One, the Mirza Abdul Wahid, was an interesting old man, with wrinkled face of a Roman type. I read of him in a Russian book that Captain Griesbach lent me. For a Hakim he was an intelligent man, and I had a respect and a liking for the courtly old fellow. He died while I was in Turkestan, and I went to see him shortly before his death. With a courtesy that pained me he rose from his sickbed and ordered tea and sweetmeats to be brought.

The other Hakim, Abdul Rashid, was a fat old

fool, pompous and ignorant, with many words. He came to see me—but I will relate that presently. The chair he sat on never recovered. It was rickety ever afterwards.

I knew now what my powers were. The Hindustanis did not openly rebel again, but they hatched a plot which, had they been more careful, might have led to unpleasant results. First, as I afterwards heard, one of them, the one whom I had made compounder, appealed to the Amîr for protection. I was his enemy, he said. *His* enemy! But the Amîr waited and watched. It *might* be true, India is a conquered country. His Highness appeared to take but little notice of me. He was courteous as always, and allowed me to be seated in his presence; but he spoke very little to me. The Hindustani, however, marred his own plot, for, not content with opposing me, he needs must quarrel with his countrymen instead of standing by them. He made a false accusation against the "dresser," who, on his part, made a countermove. They were arrested and brought before the Amîr, each swearing a contradiction to the other. They were both put to the torture—the "wedge and post"—and the compounder, screaming with fright, gave in at once and confessed. He was dismissed the service.

He knelt, imploring pardon and permission to stay; but the Amîr said, "I send you away for your own good. Twice you were taken in adultery, and, as a foreigner, I spared you. Now you falsely accuse and endeavour to ruin your own countryman. Go, before I kill you."

I think I have not described the "wedge and

post." It is a simple thing. There is an upright post in the earth. The criminal is seated on the ground and his feet lashed to the post ; wedges are inserted between the sole of the foot and the post, and are hammered home. It is a painful process, they say, but a dogged Afghan will sit till the bones of both feet are crushed, before he will utter a sound.

The Hindustani before he departed came to take leave of me—his enemy ! the coachman is not an enemy to the horses. I gave him some tea and sent him away, but I noticed he did not limp ; he must have given in soon at the post.

Then the other one, the dresser, linked the drunkard with him, and they aimed, not at me, but at the Armenian. They would cut him off. Now this fellow had been honest according to his lights. Every piece of advice he gave me I found to be sound : he instructed me in the customs of the country, described what should be done at festivals, what at visits of condolence ; told me who were the dangerous men and who the true servants of His Highness ; prevented my servants robbing me, and though he was rough and unpolished he had showed to me in a hundred minor ways a careful thought almost amounting to affection. Added to this, his dry humour and his yarns in broken English had whiled away many a dull hour when, as a newcomer, the sense of utter loneliness had oppressed me. He seemed my one friend. Was I to go back on him ?

The Hindustanis wrote to His Highness accusing the Armenian, among other things, of translating

the Amîr's words to me falsely—a most serious matter. But how could they know the Armenian translated falsely if they did not understand English? The drunkard understood, though he spoke "book English," and haltingly; hence the necessity of him in the plot.

I saw the Armenian one day looking very dejected, and I asked him what was the matter. He told me of the accusation that had just been made against him.

"Perhaps Amîr Sahib kill me," he said.

Wishing to cause him as much distress as possible, the Hindustanis had shown their hand. It was a weak thing to do. The original conception was crafty, for I saw at once how difficult a thing it was to rebut; and then, too, it was just the idea to "catch on" in the mind of an Oriental monarch. How could I say the Armenian translated correctly when I understood little or no Persian?

If anything was to be done it must be done promptly. I determined, therefore, to carry the war into the enemy's camp, and I sat down at once and wrote to His Highness in English.

I said it had come to my ears that these men—mentioning their names—had accused my Interpreter of translating falsely; that I had no reason to believe the accusation was true, for I found the accusers unworthy of trust. I then proceeded to explain why; describing the drunkenness of the one and the ignorance of the other; and pointed out their neglect of duty, naming a man of position as witness in each case that I brought forward. I was, fortunately, able to do this, for in two or three

surgical operations that I had had to do, when they showed themselves neglectful and incompetent, there had been men of position, military officers, who witnessed the operation. I sent for the secretary of Col. Attaullah Khan, then British agent with the Amîr, who understood English, asked him to translate for me, mentioning in the letter that he had done so, and at once sent the translation in to His Highness.

That night the Amîr sent for the witnesses and examined them. The next morning a messenger arrived with a written order from the Amîr that I was to bring the Armenian before him on the following day; the Hindustanis were to be accompanied by one of their countrymen, or rather a Kashmiri, who spoke English fluently. This man was a civil engineer who had served the Amîr for some eight years—a clever man, well known at the Foreign Office in India.[1]

I felt some amount of nervous disturbance, wondering what turn the affair might take. I had not been long in the country, and I did not know what were the possibilities of the case. The whole story of the Hindustanis is, in itself, unimportant. What does it matter whether they rebelled against me or not? But it brings forward one trait of the Amîr's character—his sense of what is fair—and for that reason I have related it.

The morning came.

The Armenian, with a white face, silently walked with me to the Palace. It was a sunny warm

[1] This man has since been executed for treason; he was smothered.

morning, the fruit-trees in the garden were in full bloom, and I remember the scent of the flowers, as we walked along the path. How is it, I wonder, that slight external impressions dwell for ever in one's memory when the mind is busily turned inwards? The awning was not up, and we took our stand, the Armenian and I, in the sun on the open space opposite the Palace. The two Hindustanis came up looking very yellow, accompanied by the Kashmiri, who was an intelligent looking man, with a dark skin. We waited a few minutes without speaking, and then His Highness with some attendant pages came from the Palace, and took his seat on an arm-chair on the verandah, opposite to us. The natives "salaamed," I bowed, and His Highness touched his hat in acknowledgment. His Highness then addressed the Kashmiri engineer in Persian. The engineer turned to me, he had my letter in his hand; and he said in a severe manner:—

"I have here a letter purporting to be from you. I notice that it is not dated."

"Confound your impudence," I thought, but I said nothing; I bowed.

"You know," said he, approaching nearer and altering his manner, "that this Armenian fellow cannot speak English, you had very much better——"

"Who asked for your advice, sir?" I said, turning on him suddenly. "His Highness ordered you to enquire whether that letter were mine or not." This was a shot, for when His Highness spoke, I understood only two words, "letter" and "doctor."

The engineer appeared startled, and he said :—

"A learned man like yourself, the most scientific in Afghanistan, and one on whose shoulders a grave responsibility rests, should have his words translated exact in every detail. If you expressed a wish to that effect, I am sure His Highness would engage from India at a large salary, an interpreter——"

At it again, I thought.

"That is my letter, sir. Inform His Highness." There appeared nothing more to be said, and he turned to the Amîr and addressed him in Persian.

Then His Highness burst forth. I did not understand his words, but there was no mistaking his manner—the knitted brow, the flashing eye, and the low rumble, lashing up to a roar. The storm descended upon the heads of the two Hindustanis. They stood shivering, and from yellow became green. *They* knew, and I afterwards had frequent opportunities of observing, that in moments like this the Amîr is dangerous ; men's lives tremble in the balance. A clever man who has the entrée of the Durbar, and who happens to be in favour, may sometimes on these occasions, by dropping a word here and edging in a sentence there, gradually turn the current of the Amîr's thought. If he can also by some appropriate witticism bring about a relaxation of the muscles of that grim face, causing a smile or perhaps a laugh, then a man's life is saved. They, however, more often employ their wits in adding fuel to the fire.

The Hindustanis crept away, and I was about to bow and retire, when His Highness signed to me to stop. I was then informed that breakfast

was prepared under the almond trees in the garden, and His Highness desired my company.

This was the first occasion on which the Amîr showed me any act of familiar kindness, and my relief from suspense was such, that in attempting to describe the breakfast I can hardly do full justice to the situation. The air was balmy, as we sat in the shade of the blossoming trees. Sweet-scented flowers were at our feet, and I sat sipping tea and munching macaroons in the luxurious enjoyment of living. The Armenian stood silently behind my chair, and I fancy he too, though in a more realistic sense than I, felt the luxurious enjoyment that mere life could afford.

His Highness spoke to me for some time, though I remember but little of the conversation, except the more full description His Highness gave of his bodily ailments. He did not yet ask me to prescribe for him.

When we reached home, I found my neighbour opposite, the Mirza Abdur-Rashid, had a guest. They were drinking tea together in the garden, and invited me to join them. The guest was a tall, very handsome man, plainly dressed in grey military tunic and astrakhan hat. He had very considerable dignity of manner, and was, I found, the Sirdar Gholam Hussain, a relative of His Highness, of the same clan. It is the duty of this gentleman to wait upon the Amîr at dinner, and to take charge of all food laid before His Highness. It is an honourable and also an onerous task in a country where the danger of poison is ever before the King. The drinking water of His Highness is in charge of a trusted page,

the foster-brother of one of the Princes, and when, some time after this, I was attending His Highness medically, this page it was who was entrusted with the keys of the medicine cabinet.

As we chatted over our tea, a blind boy came into the garden to sing. He would have been much improved by a few lessons on voice production, but for all that we listened to him with pleasure. His voice was soft and sweet, with a pathetic ring in it.

CHAPTER XI

LIFE IN TURKESTAN

General Nassir Khan. The Story of the Shield. The Belgian's Request. Escape of Allah Nûr: his Capture. The Amîr's Decision. The Turkestan Commander-in-Chief. Operation on Allah Nûr. The Armenian's Comments. Illness of Hadji Jan Mahomed. The Haughty Colonel: further comments by the Armenian. Sundry Acquaintances. Excursion to Takh-ta-Pûl. Fortune-telling among the Afghans. The Policeman-cook and the Lunch. Balkh. The Mosque at Mazar-i-Sherif and its Miracles. Called to His Highness. The Cool-air Pavilion: evil results of the same. Illness of the British Agent: the Armenian's advice: the Answer from the Amîr. Brigadier Hadji-Gul Khan. Afghan Endurance of Suffering. The Country Cousin among the Court Pages. Euclid and Cards.

A FEW DAYS after this I was sent for to see General Nassir Khan, who was sick. He was a bent old man, but had been, I heard, a tiger to fight. He was with the Amîr during His Highness's exile in Asiatic Russia. They said that he entered the Russian service, and rose to the rank of Colonel. He did not, however, forget his master, for he sent the greater part of his pay to the Amîr, retaining only enough for bare necessaries. Concerning this old man, I heard a little story, which throws a side-light on the Amîr, and may therefore be interesting.

There had been brought to His Highness, as a present, a very beautiful shield inlaid with gold.

This was when he had come to the throne, and was Amîr.

Everyone in the Durbar Hall feasted his eyes upon this beautiful thing, and the courtiers edged anxiously nearer the royal chair, in the hope that "Amîr Sahib" might perhaps, as he sometimes did, bestow a present upon a "faithful and deserving slave." The Amîr slowly cast his eyes round the ring, and each heart beat high, as the Amîr's eyes rested a moment on this man or that. Suddenly, the Amîr called out,

"Nassir, Pesh biár," "come forward."

Out of a far corner came Nassir. The Amîr turned to the anxious circle, and said,

"Look upon this man. He was with me in Samarcând." The hearts of the courtiers sank; Nassir, then, was to be the recipient of the shield.

"He was with me in Samarcând, and for a little thing he turned and cursed me. These were his words"—and the Amîr repeated the curse. "Is this so?" he said to Nassir. The old man hung his head in shame.

"He cursed me; he half drew his sword on me, his master. What is this man worthy of?"

There was a dead silence: the shield was forgotten, for behold Nassir's day had come. It had; but not in the sense anticipated.

"Give him the shield," said the Amîr. "He was with me in Samarcând."

I should finish the story by saying Nassir treasured the shield as the apple of his eye, and showed it me with honest pride—but no, he sold it next day for what it would fetch. Afghanistan!

When I went to see him he was suffering from lumbago. He was a courtly old man, and he gave me black tea to drink, in a Russian tea-glass.

I saw him at the Court, some time afterwards, and he came up to speak to me. He had a stoop in his shoulders, and the tailor had not cut his tunic properly, so that he had unbuttoned the top two or three buttons to release his throat. It was a gorgeous tunic, richly embroidered with gold; his sword-belt and scabbard were loaded with plates of solid gold, and he had an old-fashioned bowler hat, too large for him, on the back of his head. I was sorry. It took so from the dignity of his appearance; at least in my eyes: not so in the eyes of the Afghans, to them it was quite *en règle*.

Shortly after my visit to the general, I developed, from being constantly among the sick, a "Hospital throat," and had to stop at home for a day or two. His Highness sent me a very kind message of condolence; and while I was at home there was brought to me, from the Post Office, a post card written in French and addressed to the "Postmaster-General, Afghanistan." The Amîr wished to know what was written. I found the card came from the Postmaster of some small Belgian town. It was a proposal on his part to the Postmaster-General of Afghanistan to exchange "stamps." He was, he explained, a "stamp collector." With the help of the Armenian I sent a Persian translation to His Highness. The Amîr directed me to write and enquire what was the colour of the stamps the collector required: on receipt of his answer they would be forwarded to him. I imagine His Highness

considered that the collection was more for artistic effect than on account of the intrinsic value of the stamps. The Belgian received his stamps in due time.

Just at this time, too, I received a letter from the Editor of one of the Indian papers asking me to contribute a series of articles on Afghanistan. As, however, I was in the service of the Amîr I did not feel justified in doing so, and was compelled to leave the letter unanswered.

Another incident also occurred. There was in the Hospital a soldier named Allah Nûr. He was suffering from disease of the elbow, which had advanced to such a degree that the joint was completely disorganized. The Hakims had promised to cure him by the application of ointments. I explained to him, however, that this was impossible, and that the only remedy was to remove the arm. Poor Allah Nûr had been ill a long time: he was much reduced by pain and constant discharge, and he begged me from day to day to postpone the operation. He explained his dread of the knife, of which he seemed ashamed, by calling attention to his pitiable state of weakness. When I was laid up with my throat he seized the opportunity one night to make his escape from the Hospital: he got on a donkey which some kind friend had provided, and managed to reach a place called Takh-ta-Pul, some three or four miles off, before he was captured.

The next morning he was brought back and taken before the Amîr. His Highness said:—

"A child or a fool is he who runs from his Physician."

He sent for a probe and proceeded to examine the joint.

"Without doubt the limb must come off," said he.

"Barâie Khuda!" said Allah Nûr.

"Be silent!" said the Amîr.

"For God's sake, do not. My Lord——"

The Amîr reached out his Royal hand and boxed his ear. Allah Nûr was conducted back to the Hospital. That afternoon, my throat being better, I attended the military Durbar. His Highness discussed with me the case of Allah Nûr, advising amputation.

"It would appear wise, however," said he, "considering the man's condition of weakness, to postpone the operation for a few days, feeding him meanwhile on strong soups and administering 'Portwein.'"

I need not say that I entirely concurred.

His Highness then spoke of other matters. He explained why he walked so little and was carried from place to place in his palanquin. It was on account of the pain he suffered from chronic sciatica. The horses reserved for his riding were chosen for their steadiness, and he had ordered them to be led about the streets after dark to cure them of any habit they might have of shying. In moving, even from one chair to another, he found the assistance of a walking-stick necessary. He spoke also very kindly to me concerning my professional work, and finally asked me to visit an old friend of his who was sick —the Hadji Jan Mahomed.

Things were going well with me evidently, for directly the Durbar was over the Commander-in-Chief in Turkestan came up to speak to me and we walked

out of the Palace gardens hand-in-hand :—I hate walking hand-in-hand with a man. He was very chatty, and asked me to visit a Colonel of his who was ill. The name of the Turkestan Commander-in-Chief was Gholam Hydar, but he was a man of a much smaller frame than his namesake the Commander-in-Chief in Kabul. Also he bore a most startling resemblance to Dr. Lauder Brunton, F.R.S., the London Physician. No two brothers could be more alike. They were the same build. The very beard and moustache were trimmed in the same fashion. The only difference I could see was that Dr. Brunton is fair and the Suparsalar Gholam Hydar Khan was dark. I had, therefore, from the beginning a predisposition in favour of Gholam Hydar on account of his resemblance to my former teacher.

The next morning on arriving at the Hospital I found Allah Nûr only too ready to have his arm amputated. While he had been away from the Hospital the flies in that hot climate had found access to the sore, and there were maggots squirming about in the joint. It was very horrible. There was no postponing the operation now.

We had no operating table, and Allah Nûr was laid on a mound of earth in the shade of a tree in the garden. I arranged the instruments near and took off my turban lest it should obstruct my view at a critical moment. I put the man under chloroform, screwed up the tourniquet, and ordered the Armenian to hold the arm steady. There were two or three sweeping cuts, the grate of the saw, and the arm was off midway between shoulder and elbow.

The Afghans in the Hospital made an interested

ring of spectators. One of the Hindustanis, however, nearly fainted, and the Armenian said :

"Sir, I very glad you quick, my head is go round and round, and my eye is like I drink a bottle of brandy and a bottle of rum mixed—all is blood !" I did not ask him to help in an operation again.

After dressing the stump and seeing that Allah Nûr had recovered properly from the chloroform and was comfortable, I rode off to see His Highness's old friend, the Hadji Jan Mahomed.

I found that the Hadji lived in a typical Turkestan house in the outskirts of the town. There was the row of isolated dome-shaped rooms or houses side by side, and in front a large garden almost entirely covered with grape vines. These ran along ridges of earth about six feet apart, each being some three feet high and six feet wide.

The Hadji was a venerable-looking old fellow of about seventy, with a long white beard. He was of the same tribe as His Highness—the Barakzai Durani.

After tea and fruit had been brought, and we had had some general conversation, the Hadji informed me that he had lately arrived from Bokhara, and was suffering from a disease of the leg that is prevalent in that district. On examination I found he was suffering from "Guinea worm," a thread-like creature some two or three feet long, that burrows through the tissues of the body, generally infesting the feet and legs. The treatment adopted at the present day is the same as that pursued by the old Persian surgeons, who extracted the worm by gentle and continuous traction, winding the exposed end of the worm round a small stick of ivory, bone or wood. If the worm is broken,

local and even severe constitutional mischief is apt to ensue, and this is what had happened to the Hadji. The attempt to extract the worm had been unsuccessful, it had been broken. He had been, exceedingly ill, he said ; and I found a large burrowing chronic abscess above the right knee. It was a troublesome case, and I visited him several times. At last, one day I had the good fortune to detect the broken end of the worm, and with the greatest gentleness and care managed to extract it. The leg then soon healed.

After I had visited the Hadji, who, by the way, presented me with half a pound of Orange Pekoe, I went to see the young Colonel whom the Commander-in-Chief had asked me to visit. His house was not very far from the Palace gardens, and I found him seated on a charpoy under the trees in his garden : one or two friends and a Hakim sat with him. He was a small dark man with a haughty expression, but he looked very ill. He had had fever, but was now suffering from suppuration of the parotid, so that he had a great unbroken abscess in his cheek and neck.

I examined him carefully and decided that the abscess should be opened without delay. He did not, however, view the suggestion with any favour. He told me, very politely, that he should prefer applying certain ointments that had been advised by his friend the Hakim. I do not remember the name of the Hakim. He was one of the minor practitioners whom I really never took note of.

The Colonel also explained that should the ointment not have the desired effect, he would wish to try

the efficacy of prayer. After this, what was there to be said? I bowed, refused the tea he politely offered, and begged permission to withdraw.

Coming away I said to the Armenian :—

"What infernal nonsense it is calling me to fellows like that."

"Yes, sir," said the Armenian, "he is fool man. And that Hakim! he is nothing. His *father* cannot sit in your presence." This was soothing, perhaps. As we were going home I met little Mahomed Omer, son of Perwana Khan, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief in Kabul. He was a bright little lad of about thirteen. His face was distinctly of the Tartar type. We grew very friendly, and he often came with his tutor or "Lala" to see me. I gave him my felt hat, and he walked about proudly with it over his ears.

Soon after this I went to Takh-ta-Pul, the place where my friend Allah Nûr had escaped to, in order to inspect the hospital there. The Commander-in-Chief sent a Captain—Seyd Hussain—a huge Afghan hillman, some six feet three inches high, to accompany me, so one morning he and I and the Armenian and some servants rode off together. Seyd Hussain was quite a friend of mine; he came very often to see me, and afterwards said such polite things, that the Commander-in-Chief used to call him my "son." We took about an hour over our ride: it was so excessively hot. When we arrived at Takh-ta-Pul, I called upon the Commander-in-Chief, who was there for a few days, had tea with him, and was then conducted to a house prepared for me. I was shown into an upper chamber, carpeted and decorated, which overlooked the garden, a large square one with trees

and flowers, and commanded a view of the town and the distant mountains.

My "son" came too, and five or six others, including the Armenian, to amuse me. They sang songs, told stories, and the captain read my future in the palm of my hand : I was surprised to find palmistry an Afghan accomplishment. He told me I should have two severe illnesses in the country, but should return to my native land in safety. We had grapes and tea, and, at about one o'clock, tiffin or lunch. There was roast mutton, I remember, exceedingly oily, which one of my servants, the groom, had cooked for me. This gentleman, whom I had picked up—or rather the Armenian had picked up for me—in Turkestan, was a Peshawuri. He had been a policeman in Burma, he said. He also said he could make a pudding ; and he did, a watery rice pudding. Then a pillow was brought, and I lay on the floor and slept for an hour. After that we had more songs and stories, and at six, when the heat of the day had gone, I called again on the Commander-in-Chief and had more tea. He wished me to stay the night, but I remembered I had not inspected the Hospital yet, besides, for all I knew, the Amîr might want me. I decided therefore not to stop.

We started off for the Hospital, which was a little way out of the town. It was precisely like that of Mazar, except that there were only five or six patients in it. These were looked after by a Hakim. In the evening the Captain, the Armenian, and I rode back to Mazar, and I prepared my report for the Amîr. One thing I often regret : it is that I did not at this time act on the Armenian's suggestion

and ride to the ancient city Balkh, which was only some six or seven miles beyond Takh-ta-Pul. However, I had the feeling that I had taken a day off at Takh-ta-Pul, and must not waste any more time when there were so many sick waiting for treatment. Balkh, "the mother of cities," is situated in a province capable of great cultivation, and was a flourishing city in the time of Alexander the Great. The population, however, was so nearly exterminated by Ghengis Khan, and again by Tamerlane and his successors, that it is doubtful whether it will ever again recover even a moiety of its former importance.

There is at Mazar-i-Sherif a great Mosque or Temple, from which the town takes its name. It is a huge ornate building with minarets, and a lofty cupola built of a shining blue stone. It is held in veneration by all Mussulmans, but more especially by the sect of Shiahs. The Mosque contains a tomb which is supposed to be that of Ali, son-in-law of Mahomed, though some European authorities consider that Ali was buried near Baghdad. Be that as it may, the Mosque possesses considerable revenues, the gifts of wealthy votaries and other pious people, which are used to feed the crowds of indigent pilgrims who, at certain times in the year, flock in great numbers to Mazar. Moreover, the remains of Ali, or whoever the gentleman may be, are capable of working miracles of no mean order. They restore sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and health to the sick. During one of the religious festivals which occurred while I was in Turkestan, there were no less than five men whose

sight had been restored by their pilgrimage to the Mosque ! I know this is true, for the Amîr told me so himself !

One morning His Highness sent for me to examine his ear. He fancied he had some insect in it. This was in July, and the weather was very hot. I found His Highness seated in a small circular pavilion in the Palace garden. I had often wondered what this little building was. It was a cool-air chamber. There was a door and one window. This window was filled in with interlaced branches of an aromatic shrub ; water from a gutter trickled over the lattice work, and a current of air was driven in by a paddlewheel fan, which a man outside worked with a handle. I was ushered into the semi-darkness of the room ; I bowed, and a chair was placed midway between the door and the window in an awful draught. After the hot dry air of the outside this horrible little room felt like an ice well. I literally shivered, and there sat His Highness in the full draught, and, what is most unusual, without a head covering.

It was too dark in the Pavilion to see the condition of the ear, and His Highness at once consented to come out into the open. A chair was brought, and His Highness sat with bare head in the blazing sun. "Surely there is danger of sunstroke," I thought.

I begged permission to put on my helmet, saying I was afraid of the sun. I thought His Highness might then cover his own head ; no, he did not seem to mind the heat. I examined the ear with the speculum and found nothing in it.

He had, however, a slight catarrh of the throat and of the Eustachian tube leading from the throat to the inner ear. I pointed out the danger of exposing the body while the skin is acting freely to a draught of cold damp air; and indicated the line of treatment I should adopt if I were to attend to the ear. His Highness coincided with my views, said that he had the medicines I spoke of, and should certainly try them. It struck me that all he wanted really was to know if there were anything in his ear: he had not asked me to prescribe for him.

I heard that His Highness spoke highly of me after I left. I think he was not yet prepared to place himself entirely in my hands, and I had not forced him into the uncomfortable position of having to refuse my treatment and, therefore, appear somewhat discourteous.

There is, in this part of Turkestan, a disease which bears a strong resemblance to the so-called Delhi boil—or, more correctly, Delhi ulcer. It was exceedingly prevalent while I was in Turkestan, and after trying various remedies ineffectually I hit upon one which had a marked beneficial effect. Formerly, the ulcers—which appear on the exposed parts of the body, the hands, feet and face—were very intractable and rarely healed in less than a year. Under the popular native treatment they sometimes attained enormous proportions, and became covered with most exuberant granulations—great mounds of proud flesh: now they healed rapidly in a month, or less, according to the size, so that I gained a sort of reputation in this line. One

day the British Agent, Colonel Attaullah Khan, sent his Secretary to ask me to visit him, as he was suffering from one of these sores upon his heel, and his own Hindustani medical attendant had been unsuccessful in giving him relief.

I said, certainly, I would come, and was pulling on my boots, when the Armenian said :—

"Sir, please you kind, a little you wait."

"What for?" said I, with a boot half on.

"First, I write to Amîr Sahib and ask ; then you go or you not go, as he says. You Amîr Sahib's servant."

"Well, but——" However, I thought there was no harm in his writing at any rate, and I waited. His Highness's answer arrived.

He acknowledged the receipt of my letter of such a date, in which I asked—Had I the Royal permission to visit—and so on. He was deeply grieved on account of the illness of the Sirdar, for whom he had the greatest affection and respect, but there were weighty matters to consider. I, though an Englishman, was his servant. If, through an unforeseen calamity God should strike the Sirdar, while under my medical care, with an illness more severe than the present one, or, God forbid, even with death, then the honourable Government of England might consider in their wisdom that I, his servant, instigated by evil men, had worked harm upon the Sirdar.

The gist of it was, that whatever His Highness's reason might be, he did not wish me to attend the Agent. I therefore sent my apologies. At the next Durbar His Highness appeared pleased that I had

asked his permission before visiting the Agent, and he entered more fully, though on the same lines, into his reasons for refusing permission.

That afternoon a Brigadier named Hadji Gul Khan, with his Staff, called upon me at my house. They all came in, about a dozen of them, and the Brigadier, in a hearty sort of way, shook hands and asked how I was. I was surprised, as he was quite a stranger to me, though it is possible I was not so to him. He was a relative of the Amîr's, a Barukzai Durani: he had called to ask if I would attend to one of his soldiers who had a disease of the leg. I said, "With pleasure, which is he?"

"This is the man."

I examined him, and found he had a fatty tumour on the outer side of the right thigh. I said—

"It will be necessary to remove this swelling with the knife. It consists of a mass of fat."

"Bisyar khôb," said the Brigadier; "very good; remove it."

"Kai?" said I. "When?"

"Hala," said he. "Now."

"Certainly; come into the other room," for I did not want to spoil my beautiful carpets. I was short of chloroform, and I said to the Armenian,

"Tell the man I shall hurt him." The man said,

"Khair ast, it is nothing. Tell the Doctor Sahib, if he cut me to pieces I shall not speak."

"O, all right," I said, "tell him to lie on the ground." He lay down. I made a longitudinal incision over the tumour, and proceeded to dissect it out. It must have been very painful, but the man said nothing, neither did I; but the bystanders, when

the mass of yellowish white fat appeared between the edges of the wound, exclaimed, "Wah! wah!" in excited admiration.

I bandaged the leg, and the soldier walked back to his barracks. He had to be in bed, however, for some time afterwards. We were very good friends after that—the soldier and I. I am sure I don't know why, except that I admired his pluck, and had hurt him.

I called on the Hadji Jan Mahomed again, and found his young son there. Both the Hadji and his son kept to the pure Afghan costume, with the turban and picturesque flowing robes. The boy afterwards became a Court Page, but he looked very out of place among the Europeanized youngsters who swaggered about at the Palace. He looked out of date and countryfied in his robes, and he felt it. I noticed when I was at the Hadji's what beautiful feet he and his son had: they were like the feet of a Greek statue. The toes had shape. They were not degenerated like ours, by descent through a boot-wearing ancestry.

One of the Pages lied next door to me; he was an ugly little beggar, but rather amusing, and the Armenian suggested one evening, to while away an hour, that we should go and see him. He was hard at work puzzling over Euclid. It seemed very odd to see the well-known diagrams in the midst of Persian writing. We played cards—a sort of three-handed whist—and other games. They taught them to me, but I have completely forgotten how they were played. The cards used were just the same as those we have, except that they were cheap ones, made in Germany, and were exceedingly dirty.

Another Page-boy lived opposite ; next door to the Mirza Abdur Rashid. He was an exceedingly pretty boy, and was, in consequence, very gorgeously dressed in a scarlet and gold uniform and Kashmîr turban. Personal beauty is a fairly certain cause of rapid promotion at the Amîr's Court. Some of the Court Pages are the sons of nobles, of officers, or of wealthy men. Others are slaves.

CHAPTER XII

THE INHABITANTS OF AFGHANISTAN

Slaves in Kabul: prisoners of war and others. The frequent rebellions. The different nationalities in Afghanistan. Origin of the Afghan race. The Turk Sabaktakin. Mahmûd of Ghuzni. Buddhism displaced by Mahomedanism: agglomeration of different strains. Border Afghans. Duranis, Ghilzais. Founding of a Dynasty of Afghan Kings. Ahmad Shah. Timûr Shah. Danger to the empire. The Sons of Timûr. Zaman Shah. The Afghan "Warwick." Execution of Painda. Rebellion of the Shah's brother. Mahmûd Shah. Another brother rebels. Shujah-ul-Mulk crowned: deposed by the Barakzai chief. Exile of Shujah. The Koh-i-nûr. The Puppet-king and the Barakzai Wazir. Murder of the Wazir. The Wazir's brother becomes Amîr. The first Afghan War. Rule of Dôst Mahomed: A Standing Army established. Accession of Shere Ali. Amîr Afzal Khan. Abdurrahman. The Ghilzais: origin and customs. Border Pathans, Afridis, Shinwarris. Possible origin of Barakyais. The Hazaras: their origin and country: their language and government. Moral and Physical condition. Religion. Their outbreaks and the cause. Turkomans, Usbàks: their uncouth nature. Other races. The Christian Church.

THE slaves of Kabul are those who have been kidnapped from Kaffristan, or who are prisoners of war, taken when some tribe breaks out in rebellion against the Amîr. When it is remembered that the Afghans, though at present the dominant race, form only a part, and a minor part, of the population, there being several other nations, of different physical conformity, different language, religion, and customs, inhabiting the country, the fact of frequent outbreaks and rebellions is less inexplicable than it would otherwise be.

Of the Afghans, to commence with, there are

three chief divisions : the Durani or Afghan proper, of which race is the Amîr ; the Ghilzai ; and the Pathan or border Afghan. Each of these is divided up into many different tribes : the tribes into branches, and the branches into families.

We gather valuable information concerning Afghanistan—Ariana—and the peoples inhabiting it, from the ancient writers ; but the Afghans, as a distinct people, do not appear in history until the commencement of the tenth century ; and it was not until the eighteenth century that they were established as an independent nation under a king of their own race.

According to the most recent investigations, the Afghans, though they assert themselves to be a Jewish nation descended from Saul, are a conglomerate race, some tribes, or sections of tribes, having in their veins strains of Persian, others of Indian, Greek, or Scythian blood. Of the tribes at the present day some bear the very names and occupy the same positions that Herodotus tells us of as existing in the Persian satrapies of Darius, and others, the names of Macedonian and Greek tribes, who were introduced after the conquest of Alexander. Others again, especially in eastern Afghanistan, bear the names of Rajput tribes renowned in Indian history.

In the tenth century was the invasion by Tartar hordes headed by the Turk Sabaktakin, who established himself in southern Afghanistan, making Ghuzni his capital.

He and his son, Mahmûd of Ghuzni, founded a dynasty in Afghanistan. They were recent converts

to Islam, and destroying the then dominant religion of the country, Buddhism, shrouded under the cloak of Mahomed the strains of different nations that existed in the country. This wild mixed race, called collectively Afghan, was at all times turbulent and difficult to govern, and the tribes fought against each other without the least scruple. Their present unsettled condition, therefore, can be somewhat better understood when we consider that it has existed, and in a far greater degree, from remote ages.

It would be tedious merely to enumerate the multitudinous divisions into which the Afghan nation is divided, and I have grouped many important tribes under the comprehensive term Border Afghans. These, as the name implies, occupy the mountains on the Indian frontier, and it is they who, by their raidings, thievings, and turbulence, cause so much trouble to the Government of India.

From their position, it has been possible for investigators among the Indian Frontier Officials to study the customs, laws, and descent of these tribes more closely than those of the Afghans occupying the interior of the country.

Of the latter, the Durani and the Ghilzai tribes are, from their numerical superiority, the more important. In addition, the Durani tribe has, from two of its branches, given to the country its Afghan Kings.

It was in the last century, 1747, that Ahmad Khan, of the Suddozai division of the Duranis, created himself Ahmad Shah and founded a dynasty. It occurred in the following manner. Nadir Shah,

a Turkoman robber chief, invaded Persia, driving thence the Afghans, who had held the country for some six or seven years. He placed himself on the throne, and then proceeded to annex Afghanistan, seizing first Herat, and after a nearly two years' siege Kandahar, and finally Kabul.

He ruled with vigour and generosity, and in such a manner that he completely won the hearts of the people, and was able to bring to the assistance of his own troops large contingents of Afghan cavalry recruited especially among the Duranis and the Ghilzais. The chiefs of the tribes commanded the troops raised from their tribesmen. These men accompanied the Turk warrior in all his expeditions, sharing his glory and his success. So much help did they give him that he openly preferred them to his own troops, causing, thereby, great jealousy among the Persian soldiers. Finally, when in 1747, Nadir was assassinated, the Persians fell upon the Afghans with such fury that the latter, greatly outnumbered, sought safety in flight. On their return to their native country, the nobles of the Durani and Ghilzai tribes met together to decide upon the best means of organizing a Government for Afghanistan. Any union with the Persians was declared henceforth impossible, and they determined to elect a chief from among themselves. After much discussion, Ahmad Khan, the chief of the Suddozai Duranis, was elected King of the nation, his only formidable rival, the chief of the Barakzai Duranis, withdrawing in his favour. Ahmad Khan was crowned in the Mosque at Kandahar in 1747, taking the title of Shah. In the midst of the

festivities there arrived a convoy in Kandahar, bearing from the Punjab and Scinde the tribute due to Nadir Shah. Ahmad Shah at once seized the convoy, which was of extreme value, and wisely consolidated his power by distributing the contents liberally among the soldiers, officers, and nobles of his newly-founded kingdom.

This was the commencement of the Durani dynasty of Afghan Kings, and Ahmad, by frequent invasions, extended his Empire from Mashad in Persia to Lahore in India. He reigned twenty-six years, and was succeeded by his son, Timûr Shah, a weak man, who, moving the seat of Government from Kandahar to Kabul, employed his time, not in strengthening and consolidating his father's Empire, but in gratifying his senses. The result was what might have been anticipated: Law became a dead letter; no longer was any road safe from highway robbery; disorder and anarchy once more spread over the country, and the downfall of the Empire was imminent. The Persian provinces were lost; then followed the Punjab, Scinde, and Beluchistan.

At the death of Timûr, in 1793, matters became even worse, for his many sons, who were ruling singly or jointly over different provinces, plotted and counterplotted against one another in the endeavour to obtain the throne. Three of the sons came to the front. Zaman Shah, who held the throne for a brief period; Shujah-ul-Mulk, his full brother, who held Kandahar and plotted to obtain Kabul; and Mahmûd, who ruled in Herat as an independent Prince, and declared himself Shah of

Afghanistan. At this time the most powerful and influential of all the Sirdars was Paînda Khan, chief of the Barakzai Duranis, and son of the man who withdrew his pretensions to the Afghan throne in favour of Ahmad Shah.

Paînda, another "Warwick," supported Zaman, and by his power and influence placed him on the throne. The other brothers were entrapped and kept in prison on a meagre diet till they acknowledged his accession to the throne. Zaman Shah, his court in factions, his brothers plotting against him, his Treasury empty, India as a looting ground shut against him by the East India Company, and Persia threatening on the west, endeavoured, nevertheless, to rule on the autocratic principle, and though the Barakzais had hereditary right to the great offices of the State, he presently degraded and then executed the chief, Paînda Khan, to whom he owed the throne, and whose power and intellect would have been invaluable to him.

At once the sons of Paînda fled and joined the King's brother, Mahmûd, at Herat. Him, after much solicitation, they persuaded to advance against Zaman Shah. They were joined by the whole of the Barakzai tribe, who, recognizing Fethi Khan, eldest son of Paînda as their chief, at once placed themselves under his orders. After much fighting, and some treachery, Zaman was deposed, and his eyes put out by order of his brother. He had reigned four years.

It was in 1800 that Mahmûd became Shah. His throne was an uneasy one. First, the Ghilzai tribe rebelled against him, and several encounters were necessary before they were subdued. Then

a most sanguinary religious riot arose in Kabul between the two sects of Mahomedans—the Sunnis and the Shiahs, and the Shah, by supporting the Shiahs, alienated his own tribes, both the Suddozais and Barakzais, who are Sunnis. This was the commencement of his downfall, for while Fethi Khan was in Bamian subduing a rebellion of Hazaras, the other chiefs formed a conspiracy and invited Shujah-ul-Mulk, the Shah's younger brother, to advance on Kabul, promising him their support. Shujah at once advanced, Mahmûd fled to the Bala Hissar fort, and Shujah was placed on the throne amid the greatest rejoicings.

The first act of the new Shah was to seize his brother, the ex-King, and order his eyes to be put out. This order, however, he revoked, owing to the influence of his new Wazîr or Prime Minister—one of the chiefs who had invited him to seize the throne. He imprisoned the ex-King, therefore, in the dungeons of Bala Hissar.

Fethi Khan returning from Bamian found Shujah King. He had, however, a vendetta against the new Shah for the murder of his father, Paînda, by the Shah's full brother, Zaman.

Secretly, and with the help of his brother, he rescued Mahmûd from prison, and again placed him on the throne in Kabul, himself taking his hereditary post of Wazîr. Shah Shujah, routed by Fethi Khan, fled to India, and sought the support of Runjit Singh, the Sikh Maharajah of Lahore. But Runjit Singh held certain provinces formerly belonging to Afghanistan, and he would do nothing for Shujah. He, however, extorted from him a valuable diamond that Shujah had guarded through all his adventures. This

diamond had passed from Moghul to Turkoman, from Turkoman to Afghan, and from Afghan has passed through the Sikh to England. It is the Koh-i-Nûr. Shujah, in terror of his life, escaped from the Sikh, and in 1815 threw himself on the mercy of the East India Company, who gave him a pension and a residence in Ludhiana.

Meanwhile, in Kabul, Mahmûd gave way to every kind of sensual excess. He was a puppet in the hands of his powerful minister, Fethi Khan, under whose rule the country recovered some of its former prosperity. Mahmûd's son and heir, Kamran, jealous of the power and increasing influence of Fethi Khan, succeeded in entrapping the minister, and, with most atrocious tortures, he murdered him. The death of this master spirit, warrior, and statesman was an irreparable loss to Afghanistan, and anarchy once more spread over the country.

Mahmûd and Kamran fled to Herat, and the rest of the country was divided among the brothers of the murdered Wazîr—Kabul, Jelalabad, and Ghuzni falling to the share of Dôst Mahomed, the favourite brother of Fethi Khan, and the most resolute and gifted.

The government of the country, therefore, with the exception of Herat, which was still held by Mahmûd Khan, fell from the power of the Durani Shah to that of the Durani Wazîr.

Dôst Mahomed took the title of Amîr of Kabul, or Military Commander, and to him British envoys were sent on missions of commerce and discovery.

At this time Russia was urging on Persia to take Herat, but as Herat commands Kandahar, and thus is, as it were, the gate of India, the British were com-

pelled to make a counter-move. Then came the first Afghan war—the disastrous endeavour on our part to revive the extinct Suddozai Durani dynasty. Dôst Mahomed was taken prisoner to Calcutta; Shah Shujah was put on the throne at Kabul; and Mahmûd, with his son Kamran, as successor, acknowledged as Governor of Herat.

The failure of the plan is a modern story. Shah Shujah was murdered by the Afghans in 1842, and Dôst Mahomed was released and allowed to find his way back to Kabul, where he was welcomed to the throne with acclamations.

The rule of Dôst Mahomed, compared with what had gone before, was a boon to Afghanistan; merchants and caravans could travel with some amount of safety through his dominions. Trade recovered considerably, and with its growth the revenues of the Amîr increased. For a long time he made no attempt to extend his dominions, but contented himself in rendering secure and prosperous those provinces he already possessed. His brothers lacked the power, though not the wish, to compass his overthrow, for though they were bold fighting men, they possessed neither the capacity nor the resolution of the Amîr. The danger to the sovereigns of Afghanistan had, hitherto, been the difficulty in retaining the allegiance of the great Chiefs—the Barons—those men who could call into the field the thousands of their clansmen to fight for or against the King. Dôst Mahomed, though not lacking in generosity towards them, nevertheless showed them that it would be both difficult and dangerous to attempt to throw off their allegiance. As a check to their power in the field he

established, for the first time in Afghanistan, a standing army. The Chiefs submitted, though at first unwillingly, to the rule of the Amîr, for doubtless it seemed better to yield to a monarch both just and generous than to attempt revolts, the issue of which was in any case doubtful, and might place them under the insecure and cruel despotism of the Suddozais. Of the extension of his dominions to Kandahar, Herat, and Turkestan I will speak later.

Dôst Mahomed appointed a younger and favourite son, Shere Ali, to succeed him, the only one of his sons whose mother was of Royal blood. In 1868 Amîr Shere Ali was deposed by his elder brothers, Afzal Khan and Azim Khan.

Amîr Afzal Khan, eldest son of Dôst Mahomed, reigned but five months and died. He left one son only, the present Amîr, Abdurrahman.

He was succeeded by his brother, Azim Khan, who, however, was not recognised as Amîr by the British, and in the following year Shere Ali again obtained the throne. His estrangement with the British, their advance, and the Amîr's death in Mazar, I have spoken of. Yakûb, who was Amîr when Cavagnari was assassinated, was son of Shere Ali. When Yakûb was deposed Abdurrahman Khan was invited by the British to ascend the throne.

Considering the line of men through whom he is descended, it is not so surprising a thing that Amîr Abdurrahman has shown talent as a ruler, politician, and general of so high an order. Dôst Mahomed and his brother, Fethi Khan, their father and grandfather, Paînda and Jummal Khan, were the type of men who change the course of history.

I have given this very curtailed sketch of what has been happening in Afghanistan during the last hundred and fifty years, so that one may see *who* Amîr Abdurrahman is and why he is Amîr.

We may now go back to our former subject, the peoples inhabiting Afghanistan.

The Ghilzai Afghans are of doubtful origin : they are sometimes reckoned as Pathan. Their language is Pukhtu, and their manners, customs and religion the same as those of the Duranis ; but they are said to have come into the country with the Turkoman Sabaktakin in the tenth century, and to be the representatives of a Turk tribe from beyond the Jaxartes, called Khilichi, "swordsmen." More recent investigation seems to point, however, to their being of Rajput (Scythian) descent ; for the clans into which the tribe is divided have mostly Indian names.

The Ghilzai is a very numerous and powerful tribe occupying that part of the country which lies between the provinces of Kandahar and Kabul. They are a race of fighting men, but have not given a ruler to Afghanistan. One reason for their submission to the government of the Duranis at Kabul is the fact that a large portion of the tribe is nomadic in its habits, moving from highlands to lowlands with the seasons. They spend the summer among their villages on the uplands of the Suffed Kôh, Tobah, and Khôjah Amràn Mountains, and in the winter packing their belongings on camels, asses and bullocks, and driving their flocks before them, they descend and camp on the warm plains. Without their winter quarters on the plains they could not exist, neither themselves nor their flocks.

Of the numerous tribes of Pathans or Border Afghans I will speak only of the two to which I have already referred in the course of my narrative : the Afridis, who occupy the mountains around Peshawur and the east of the Khyber ; and the Shinwaris, who occupy the western extremity of the Khyber. The Afridis, who number about thirty thousand families, say they were transplanted by Mahmûd of Ghuzni from the Ghor country, which lies between Kabul and Herat, to their present hills as military colonists for the defence of the Khyber Pass. Two centuries later the colony was increased by fresh arrivals planted by Shahabuddin Ghori. They are probably of Turkish descent. The Afridis are partly cave dwellers, but live also in movable huts of matting and wickerwork —a rough imitation of the Turkoman *Khirgar*. They have few villages and no tents. They are described by Dr. Bellew (a keen observer, who spent many years on the frontier in the study of the Pathan) as a war-like and predatory people, "of lean, wiry build, with keen eyes and hungry features, and of light complexion, but not of fine physique."

Other of the Pathan tribes near them differ in physical conformity, for they are tall and manly, being often as fair and as strongly built as Englishmen.

The Shinwaris, whom I mentioned in the early part of my narrative as being considered dangerous even by the Amîr's troops, are by some supposed to be of Albanian descent, and to have been placed by Nadir Shah in their present position as a guard to the Khyber. They, however, do not show a trace of such an origin, for their manners and customs are Pathan, and their language Pukhtu. Bellew considers

them as probably the Sanobari or Sinawàri Indians of Rajput descent. Their "peaceful" occupation is that of muleteers, and they breed herds of mules for the carrying trade.

One interesting point in the descent of the Amîr's tribe, the Barakzai Duranis, is called attention to by Bellew. He considers that they are probably an offshoot of the Baraki mentioned by the Emperor Babar as one of the principal tribes of Kabul in the early part of the sixteenth century. These Barakis are considered a distinct race by themselves, and are not claimed by Afghan or Pathan, Ghilzai or Hazara. They use among themselves a dialect which appears to resemble a Hindi language. Bellew identifies the Baraki tribe of Kabul with the Barkai of Herodotus, who were recognized as Greeks by Alexander and his followers. They were a colony of Greek exiles transported from Kyrènè in Lybia, to the Logar Valley of Kabul, by Darius Hystaspes. This valley is to-day their principal settlement. The Baraki have for ages retained the reputation of being excellent and reliable soldiers, and the Royal Barakzai Durani family have always entertained a body-guard composed of Baraki. The separation of Baraki and Barakzai, with the diminution in number of the one and the increase of the other, is explained by the probable suggestion that the former reluctantly, and the latter readily, accepted the religion of Islam in the early period of its introduction.

Another nation, and in point of numbers the most important, occupying Afghanistan, is the Hazara. They are mostly of the Tartar type, and occupy the mountains of the west and north-west of Afghanistan.

They, like the Afghan, are a mixed race. Though chiefly Turk they have tribes among them of Rajput, Kopt, Abyssinian, and Persian descent. The Hazara proper, who inhabit the Ghor country, claim to be descendants of military colonists planted in this country by Ghengis Khan, the Turkestan chief, in 1200. Probably, however, the influx was slow, extending over several generations, and was more the migration of a nation than a purely military conquest. The language of the Hazaras is an old dialect of Persian with some admixture of Turki words. At the Kabul Hospital when a Hazara came for treatment I found his language so difficult to understand, that in the absence of my Armenian interpreter, I often had to call upon some one to translate for me into modern Persian. With their high cheek-bones, small oblique eyes, and scanty beards, they differ much in physiognomy from the Afghan, and their form of government, manners, and morals are equally divergent.

The government of their chiefs is more despotic and less republican than that of the Afghan chiefs. Though some tribes are said to be nomadic, predatory, and the poorest and most barbarous of all the races in Afghanistan, those I came in contact with seemed, compared with the Afghans, a hard working peaceful people, unless they were roused by cruelty and oppression; then, indeed, they fought with dogged persistence. They seemed to have a certain simplicity of character which contrasted strongly with the duplicity of the Afghan. Though undersized, they are of great physical strength, and as slaves taken in war, or servants for hire, they seemed to me to do all the hard work in Kabul. In religion they are mostly Shiah

Mahomedans, and therefore to the Sunni Afghans they seem almost as much infidels as the Christians. They make their own powder and rifles, are excellent shots, and, in spite of the mountainous country in which they dwell, are excellent horsemen. As a nation they have an intense love of liberty, and have been more or less independent for generations. The last monarch who subjugated them was Timûr Shah or Tamerlane. They have, however, paid tribute to the present Amîr, though many a battle was fought before they yielded.

To this day the Hazaras are constantly breaking out in rebellion, but from stories I heard in Kabul I gather they would willingly pay tribute to the Amîr as King, but for the outrages and atrocious cruelties practised upon them by His Highness's troops.

In their day these Hazaras formed a very powerful sovereignty, which extended from the Euphrates to the Ganges. They it was who supplanted the Turk at Ghuzni, and who overthrew the Rajput dynasty, conquered India, and established the Mahomedan religion in that country.

Further north, on the banks of the Oxus river, the border line that divides Afghan from Russian Turkestan, are Turkoman and Usbàk tribes. The Turkoman is, as the name implies, of Turk descent. This people lived to the south of the Thian Shan or Celestial mountains, and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries overran Bokhara, Armenia, and Georgia. Physically they are immensely strong men, taller than the Hazara, of rough manners and coarse fibre, seeming more or less insensible to pain or sorrow: their cold insensible nature contrasting strongly with the more amorous nature of Afghan and Persian.

I had a practical illustration of their rough manners one day in Mazar. I was riding back from the Hospital, and at some little distance from the city I met a troop of Turkoman cavalry. I was interested and rode quietly on, never dreaming of getting out of their way, for I naturally thought they would do as others had done, make way for a Distinguished Foreigner. Not in the least. They just did not ride over me, but in a moment I was in the midst of the troop, and as they rode carelessly and rapidly by, one man brushed against me, ripped my boot, tore the buttons off the leg of my breeches, and nearly twisted me out of the saddle. Consider the iniquity of the act! The Amîr's own Physician and a common Turkoman! I was indignant; but decided to ride on and take no notice; they are men of such exceedingly coarse fibre.

These people are nomads, living in tents, or, when they camp for a longer period, in temporary huts, or oftener in a sort of wickerwork wigwam, dome-shaped, and covered with felt called the "khirgar." These wigwams can be taken down and packed on a camel in less than an hour. The Turkoman women are unveiled, and work in camp and field, and weave the beautiful rugs that are so much in demand in Afghanistan and India.

The Usbâks are a confederation of many Turk and Tartar tribes, not one race. They are flat faced, with scanty beard and slanting eyes. They speak the same language as the Turkoman—Turki—and have the same disposition, tastes, and ferocity. They do not, however, lead a wandering life, but dwell in villages, and may be considered the established and civilized inhabitants of Central Asia beyond the Oxus. Their

type is occasionally somewhat altered by intermarriage with the Persians.

There are other prominent but less numerous races in Afghanistan : for instance, the Kizilbashes, who are the better educated among the townspeople. There is a colony of them in Kabul, at Chendawal, to this day. They are Persianized Turks, who were brought to Afghanistan by Nadir Shah in 1737. They speak pure Persian, and constitute chiefly the merchants, physicians, traders, and scribes. His Highness's chief secretary, the Dabier-ul-Mulk, was a Kizilbachi. These men belong to the Shiah sect of Mahomedans.

At one time there was a colony of Armenians in Kabul, brought from Persia by Nadir Shah, and a Christian church was in existence, until it was accidentally blown to pieces in the last Afghan war.

The Armenians, however, have drifted away to the large towns in India and Persia, and only one family remains, that of my Interpreter.

I went one day to pay my respects to a Christian lady in Kabul, an aged Armenian some ninety years old. She wept bitterly as she told me of the church built by a Mahomedan King for their use and destroyed by Christians.

Of other races in Kabul, there are Tajiks of Arab descent, Hindkis of Hindu descent, and Kohestani and Pashai tribes, who are considered to be the unconverted aborigines of the Kabul province.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BIRTH OF PRINCE MAHOMED OMER

Hazara slaves, Kaffir slaves, and others. The slave boys at the Palace. Court Pages. High positions occupied by slaves. Treatment of slaves in Kabul. The slave boy and the Son. Price of slaves. Wife and children of Hazara Chief in slavery. Hazara slaves a glut in the market. Illness of the Hostage of an Afghan Chief. Abdur Rashid down with fever. Own illness and the aches thereof. The British Agent's postal arrangements. Occasional fate of the letters. Postage in Afghanistan. Power of annoying possessed by Interpreters. The Chief Bugler. The Page boy and the Sirdar. Outrageous conduct: the punishment. The Page boy and the Amîr: the result. The uproar on September 15th: the cause. The bearer of good tidings. Congratulations to the Sultana. The crowd outside the Harem Serai. The Sultana's reply. Matter of succession complicated. Display of fireworks: the accident. Surgical operations. The Priest with a blemish: his request. The Amîr's reply. The operation. The Mirza's comments.

I WAS speaking of the slaves of Kabul when the subject of the peoples inhabiting the country presented itself. Just now the majority of slaves in Afghanistan are Hazaras, probably because they have lately been fighting against the Amîr.

There are also children and women taken prisoners from other rebellious tribes, and Kaffir slaves kidnapped as children from Kaffristan. A batch of the former were brought to Mazar while I was there. His Highness took about a dozen. They were good-looking boys of the Persian type, and I was told they came from the direction of Maimana, to the north-west of Afghanistan towards Panjdeh.

No one understood their language. It was not ordinary Pushtu, nor Turki, nor Persian. They, however, picked up Persian very quickly.

The slave boys at the Palace are placed under the care of one official whose duty it is to look after their comfort and train them in their several duties. They are really Court Pages, and their work is shared by the sons of nobles and gentlemen. A slave boy, if he has beauty, ability, and fidelity—a rare combination, perhaps—can rise to the highest positions under the Government.

One whom I knew, holding a very high position in the Afghan army, was sold by the Amîr when he was in exile in Russia. The man ran away from his master, and found his way back to the Amîr; again he was sold and again escaped. He returned to Afghanistan with the Amîr and was raised to high estate. He was a kindly man, but, in spite of his dog-like fidelity to the Amîr, was not of strong character. I do not know of what nationality he was: I was told that he was not an Afghan, but came from the north-east. His son was dictinctly of the Tartar type, though he himself had more the regular features of the Persian. I saw in the newspapers a short time ago that he was dead.

Two others I knew, slaves, holding high positions in the Amîr's service, who were with him in Russian Turkestan. His Highness will forgive much in these men, and punish but lightly shortcomings on their part.

As regards the treatment of the slaves in Kabul, it is simply a question of property: a man has the power to sell, kill, or do as he pleases with his

slave ; but, speaking generally, the slaves are well-treated, especially among the upper classes. Sometimes it is impossible to tell from their appearance which is a man's slave-boy and which is his son.

In Mazar, two boys used often to come and see me : they were dressed very much alike, in gold embroidered tunics, and each had a little revolver. I heard one of them was a slave, but for a long time I thought the slave was the son. He was an amusing little fellow, quick at repartee ; but he lacked the dignity of the other—the almost mournful quality of which made me think he was the slave.

The price of slaves varies according to their quality : ordinarily it is thirty rupees the span : by span I mean the distance from the outer side of one hand to the outer side of the other when, with the fingers closed, the thumbs are extended to their utmost, the tips touching. This is roughly about a foot, so that a baby that length would cost thirty rupees. However, in Kabul, a short time ago, a Hazara baby was bought for half-a-crown ; the purchaser got the mother for fifteen shillings, and a little boy of six for five shillings. This woman, with her children, were the family of a Hazara of wealth and position. Unfortunately the tribe rebelled ; the men were mostly killed, and the women and children became a glut in the market. Some time after the purchase I was asked to examine the small boy of six medically. He had been ill about ten days, and a Hakim had been called to attend him. The case had been diagnosed as typhoid fever—and the opinion

given that the child was improving. I found the child had meningitis, or inflammation of the membranes of the brain. He died the same night : a sheer loss of five shillings to the owner.

I saw the mother during my visit; she was a good-looking woman for a Hazara. She did not make much disturbance at the death of the child, at any rate while I was in the house. She seemed more stunned than anything else.

Recently in Kabul it was a very common sight to see a gang of Hazara women, with their unveiled faces and their dingy blue dresses, ragged and dirty, conducted through the town by a small guard of soldiers with bayonets fixed. As the war progressed they became so plentiful that His Highness would often reward a faithful servant or officer by presenting him with one or more as an addition to his Harem.

I had been in Turkestan some three months when I was sent for one morning to see a young man, the brother of one of the few remaining powerful Afghan chiefs. Most of the others have been "expunged." As a rule I did not visit the sick at their homes unless I received an order from His Highness to do so, or unless some one I knew personally sent for me to visit him. This young man, however, was a friend of the Armenian's. His brother's territory lay not very far from the British frontier, and he himself was a hostage with the Amîr for the good behaviour of his brother, the Chief. I found he had malarial fever very severely. When I returned home my neighbour opposite, the Mirza Abdur Rashid, sent for me to

see him. He also was down with the fever. I prescribed for them both.

The next morning I felt rather ill myself, but started about eight to see the Chief's brother again. The sun seemed frightfully scorching that morning; it was August, and presently the headache I had grew so intense that each step was agony.

I gave in at last, and turned my horse home again. I went into the inner room and sat on the charpoy. The Armenian shut all the doors and windows to keep out the heat, and propped me against the wall with pillows. Then the backache began. Oh, my bones! I was one great ache. The Armenian had seen the treatment I put others under, and he weighed out the medicines and brought them to me. I was too stupid with fever and aches to care what I took.

Just then the British Agent's Secretary, Amin Ullah, was announced. He was an interesting man, but I was compelled to greet him with lugubrious groans. He brought me five home letters, which my aching eyeballs would not allow me to read.

I used to send my letters through the Agent's post in those days. He had a separate compartment in the Amîr's post-bag, which, by arrangement between the Government and His Highness, was locked and sealed. Once or twice the letters did not reach their destination, and it was said that some of the wild hillmen had pounced on the postman and carried off his bag. They might do the same to anyone carrying a bag, but it was never found out who were the robbers. Afterwards, I did not send my letters through the Agent's post, but sent them

direct to the Amîr's post-office. His Highness allowed me to send and receive three letters monthly, free of postage. This was not so small a matter as it seems, seeing that in Turkestan the postage of each letter came to rather more than its weight in silver. All I had to do, therefore, was to stick on an Indian stamp. I found my letters arrived about as safely through the Amîr's post as through the Agent's, at any rate for some years. Afterwards, when we came to Kabul, I found there an interpreter, a Hindustani, who was in favour with the Prince. He tried hard to get on as Interpreter for me; thinking, probably, that baksheesh from the patients could be worked; as I would not have him, he proceeded to intrigue against me. I did not take much notice of the man, knowing that he could not do much harm. However, he succeeded in getting hold of some of my home letters, which was sufficiently annoying, and once he placed me and the other Englishmen in Kabul in a position of no little danger: how this occurred I will relate presently.

I got well of the fever in about a fortnight, and then I heard that both the Chief's brother and the Mirza Abdur Rashid were still ill. I had thought that, of course, the medicine I had prescribed had been given them every day. No, everything was at a standstill, both with them and at the Hospital, just as I had left it a fortnight before; this is so truly Oriental.

I, of course, visited them, and they rapidly got well under quinine.

At this time His Highness requested me to visit

one of the page boys, the son of a former Commander-in-Chief at Herat, who was sick. He was a smart lad of about fifteen; in appearance very like an English boy. His house was just opposite a low tower where the chief bugler took his stand morning and evening to sound the royal salute. As I visited the boy when my day's work was done, I was generally in his house when the evening salute was sounded. The bugler was a stout red-bearded man with blue eyes: he looked just like an Irishman. But however much these men may look like English and Irish, closer acquaintance shows how strongly contrasted the Oriental is with the Occidental. The boy recovered in due time, but there is a story about him, an incident that occurred a year or two later, while I was in the country, which may be interesting.

The boy was not a bad sort of boy—he looked English—and we were very good friends, so that I quite enjoyed my visits to his house—but he was an Afghan. One day the Sirdar Gholam Hussain, the dignified man who has charge of His Highness's food, directed the boy to perform some slight task, I forget what, and the boy bluntly refused. The Sirdar spoke sharply to him, but the boy apparently resented being spoken to, for he at once drew his revolver and shot at the Sirdar; he missed, and whipping out his sword he rushed on him. The Sirdar warded off the blow and threw the boy down. He was brought before the Amîr. In consequence of his former behaviour—he had been rather a favourite with the Amîr—and on account of the services his father, who was dead, had rendered the

Amîr—his punishment was remitted to the extent of a severe caning, and he was discharged from the Court for a time and sent back to Herat.

Some months later he was recalled. This was not the end of his adventures, for soon after his return he objected to the smallness of the pay he received as page. The Amîr increased it somewhat. The lad, apparently presuming upon the Amîr's remarkable forbearance, again expressed discontent. His Highness is not a man to be played with. He was exceedingly angry, and the punishment was proportionately severe. The boy was degraded and sent to jail in Kabul. This is a horrible place, and they who enter it are often never seen again. However, when we returned to Kabul, I met a gang of prisoners in chains returning to jail after the day's work in the arm factory : the boy was among them ; but he covered his face as I rode by. He was in prison about two years. I met him one day after he was released. He looked very haggard and old, not at all like the boy I had known in Turkestan. I pulled up to speak to him, but he seemed even then to wish to escape observation, so that I merely said, "Jour-asti? Are you well?" and rode on again.

The Chief's brother, when he became quite well, came very often to see me. He was a handsome fellow, and I made a sketch or two of him in my notebook. He had a great desire to learn drawing, but he was never any good at it. I taught him how to write his name in English, and he learnt a few words also.

One Sunday morning, September 15th, 1889, I

was surprised to hear a considerable uproar : there was the report of rifles, the playing of military bands, and there seemed to be an air of bustle and excitement with every one. Presently a man came rushing breathlessly into my house to tell me the news. It was not an advance of the Russians, nor even an outbreak of the Hazaras : no, the Sultana, the favourite wife of the Amîr, had given birth to a *son*. Had it been a daughter the matter would probably have been hushed up.

"Why this hurry?" I said to the Armenian.

"This man, Dîn Mahomed, a little he is my friend; I know a child come into house of Amîr Sahib, but I know not when : better this, at once we go to Harem Serai and send in Salaam, and Her Highness made glad upon you."

"Ah, I see," said I, "and the little, your friend, Dîn Mahomed, he would like baksheesh?"

"Please you kind," said the Armenian with an engaging smile.

"How much?" I asked.

"Sir, your wish. One twenty rupees," he said, carelessly.

"Isn't it rather dear at the price?" I said.

"Oh, sir! no. Other gentlemen, and rich man Supersala and Officer, give twenty or forty gold *tilla* and three or four horses."

"To a servant! For just bringing news!"

"The servant, he is not keep it. He bring to his master, Amîr Sahib, and Highness make glad upon that. Some he give to servant, and some he give to other servant. And Officer and Supersala make glad that Highness not send it back."

"Well, oughtn't I to give more than twenty rupees?"

"No, sir. In my o-pinion twenty rupees enough. You, mussâfir and stranger, and not know custom of Afghanistan."

The bearer of news is rewarded with presents or with blows, according to the quality of the tidings.

Mounted men were racing off full speed to Kabul and the other big towns; those who got in first received the baksheesh.

We rode off to the Harem Serai to offer my congratulations. I found a large crowd in the garden outside the Serai. There was an elephant with gay trappings, which attracted a great deal of attention. Two brass bands, with crowds round them, were hard at work, their style reminding one of a parish school band. Pipers were marching up and down gaily playing *Scotch* tunes on their bagpipes. Native instruments were giving vent to moans; shrieks, and thuds.

When we got into the garden I found I attracted rather more attention than I either expected or desired. However, seeing the Commander-in-Chief and some other officers sitting on a bank under the shade of a tree, I went up and shook hands with them, and with the assistance of the Armenian we had some conversation: not about the weather, that is a subject which is never discussed in Afghanistan. Presently I saw my small friend Mahomed Omer, son of Perwana Khan, who was one of the Pages in the Harem, and I sent in my congratulations by him. By and bye two of the Amîr's younger sons, the Princes

Hafiz Ullah and Amin Ullah, about ten and six years old—who had visited the Sultana that morning—came from the Harem. They conveyed the Sultana's thanks for congratulations. Her Highness seemed very pleased that I had called, for she sent me a present of five hundred rupees by the hand of the little Princes. It struck me at the time that possibly she viewed the visit rather as a national than a personal compliment.

The birth of the youngster may, perhaps, in the future complicate the matter of succession. Before his birth the heir presumptive was the Amîr's eldest son, Prince Habibullah. The mother of the eldest Prince, however, is not of the royal tribe, whereas the Sultana is royal on both her father's and her mother's side. Her father was a priest and a Seyid, or descendant of the prophet, and therefore hereditarily a beggar : but he was also a Suddozai Durani, and he asked for and received the daughter of Amîr Dôst Mahomed in marriage.

Now, therefore, that there is a son who is royal on both sides, Prince Habibullah's claim is less decided than it was.

On the day after the Prince's birthday the Festival was continued. Bands were playing all day, and in the evening a display of rockets—native made—was given.

One small boy managed to get hold of some explosive affair—a bomb, I heard—and was playing about with it when it exploded. As he was not killed they brought him to me. The child was not pleasant to look upon, for the injury was chiefly in his face. I gave him a few whiffs of chloroform

and cleared away the blood; but it took some little time to fit in the pieces and sew up the rents. I had a good deal of trouble, I remember, with the corner of his mouth and with the brow and left eyelid, so much was gone. It was a sort of puzzle to fit things together. The left eyeball had to be removed entirely, it was destroyed. However, he made an excellent recovery, with remarkably little disfigurement, except for the loss of the eye and part of the eyebrow.

I seemed to be in for operations just then; and one I had to do whether I wanted to or not.

It was on a young Moolah or Priest: he had a goitre—or enlarged thyroid.

I think I have mentioned that a priest is disqualified for the priesthood if he has any bodily blemish, and this enlargement in the throat distressed the Moolah greatly, for he was jeered at on account of it. Several times he had asked me to "cut away" the tumour, but there were reasons why I refused to employ *surgical* treatment. He was improving, though slowly, under *medical* treatment; the swelling was distinctly smaller. Removal of a goitre by the knife is not an operation to be generally recommended; firstly, because of the proximity of the gland to the great arteries of the throat and its very free blood supply; and, secondly, because, if the gland is removed successfully there are serious consequences that invariably follow, namely, the slow development of a most curious disease called Myxœdema, in which the sufferer has the appearance of being dropsical, though he is not

so, and in which the speech and intellect are curiously affected.

I could not explain all this to the Moolah through the Armenian, and I contented myself by saying "Né me-kunum, mé-muri." "I shall not do it, you would die."

He bothered me time after time, and at last I said impatiently to the Armenian—

"Tell him to go and get an order from His Highness."

I thought that would end the matter, never thinking that he would go. He went, and, moreover, got the order. I at once wrote to the Amîr and explained that the operation was not necessary, and that, if attempted, the man would probably die. I received His Highness's answer very soon after. He said—

"Your letter, in which you say —— and so on —— has been received by me. The reasons therein set forth as to the danger of the cutting need not be an obstacle in the way of its performance. If the man recover it is good, and if he die, what does it matter? He himself is willing to undergo the risk."

There was nothing for it, therefore, but to operate. I told the Moolah he was foolish, and the operation would probably cost him his life. He said—being interpreted—

"No, sir. I have no fear. You will not let me die."

His complete confidence, however, did not inspire me with the same feeling. There was a wooden platform in my garden, and we pulled it under the

colonnade, where it was shady, and the Moolah lay down. I had sent for one of the Hindustanis to give chloroform, but he did not come : it was the Sabbath, Friday. My neighbour, the Mirza Abdur Rashid, said *he* could give chloroform, he had seen it done. As I could not operate and attend to the chloroform as well, I was compelled to let the Mirza try. He put the man under successfully—he had seen it done —though he knew nothing of the dangers of giving too much. I made a longitudinal incision in the middle line of the throat and commenced dissecting down with a knife and a pair of forceps, the skin being stretched back by one of the soldiers, who were gathered in a group round. When I had got rather deep there was a sudden gush of blood, rapid and copious. I had divided the first of five arteries that had to be cut through before the tumour could be removed. I wanted to tie the artery, but there was no finding it at the bottom of a deep narrow cut that filled with blood the moment the sponge was lifted. At last I managed blindly to catch the artery with a pair of forceps and tie it : the bleeding ceased. After this, I dissected down and tied the arteries before I cut them. Then I removed the tumour in its capsule. It weighed ten and a-half ounces. I sent it to the Amîr, who congratulated me on the success of the operation. The Moolah we left on the platform under the colonnade, covering him with a sheepskin postîn, and gave orders to the soldiers of the guard to take turns in watching by his side, and to call me if the bleeding broke out or if he seemed worse. The Moolah, poor fellow, had high fever the next day, and the third day he died. A

day or two afterwards I said to the Mirza how sorry I was he had died, but the Mirza laughed and said :—

" Dèk ne me-showi. Be not sorrowful, you said he would die, and he died. It was so written in the book of Fate."

CHAPTER XIV

THE REARING OF THE INFANT PRINCE

The Amîr's autograph letter. Medical consultation concerning the rearing of the Prince. Conflicting customs of the Orient and the Occident. Conservative nurses. The "Hakim fair to see": the patient: his fate. Lessons in Persian and lessons in English. Portrait painting. Dietary difficulties. Gracious acts of His Highness. Amîr's letter of condolence. The Royal visit by deputy. Congratulations of the British Agent. The doleful dumps of illness and the cheery Armenian. Accident to the favourite Page. The khirgar. Story of the attempt upon the life of the Amîr. An Earthquake. Afghan appreciation of pictures and jokes. Generosity of the Amîr. The first winter Durbar. His Highness's invention. The Royal costume. The bearing of the men brought before His Highness. The Amîr's question: the Parable. Arrangement and furnishing of the dining-room. The guests. The breakfast. The press of State business. Amîr's thoughtful kindness. The Armenian's comment. Visit to the Commander-in-chief. The ride to the Hospital. Adventure with the "fool horse." Hospital patients in winter. "Two much and three much."

At the beginning of October I received an autograph letter from His Highness, directing me to consult with the two chief Hakims, Abdul Wahid and Abdur Rashid, and advise as to the best manner in which to rear the infant Prince. This is a literal translation of His Highness's letter :—

"To the Honourable and Righteous Dr. Gray,

"Be it known to you that my two Physicians, Mirza Abdul Wahid Khan and Mirza Abul Rashid Khan, are directed by me to consult you and take your advice concerning the customs and ways in which Europeans of to-day rear their children, and also concerning the proper time for putting on and removing the bandages, and the time of giving milk,

and of cradling and sleeping, and all things which are necessary for the nourishment of a child, which are written by the doctors and scientific men of Europe. These physicians are acquainted with the customs of the Greeks, and I desire that they be informed concerning the customs of Europeans.

"AMÎR ABDURRAHMAN,

"Finis." "I have written it."

The Hakims arrived at half-past seven in the evening. I have spoken of the courtly old Abdul Wahid with his Roman face. He was Hakim to Amîr Shere Ali. Abdul Rashid was the very fat man with interminable words. He did the talking, because he was ignorant, and Abdul Wahid sat silent. They were both exceedingly polished, as became Court physicians.

We compared the customs of Orientals and Occidentals in the rearing of infants. The Hakims were very surprised to hear that we did not bandage infants closely from shoulder to ankle, and so prevent them from moving a limb.

"How then can you ensure that the child's limbs grow not crooked? What other method is there for keeping them straight?"

I said, "Cannot Allah who created each child finish His work and cause its limbs to grow straight without our help?"

"Beshak—undoubtedly, Allah is all-powerful and all-wise; but our fathers, and our fathers' fathers, placed bandages on the children, and they were wise men. How do you account for the fact that in some children the legs are bent?"

I forthwith entered into an explanation of the

causes of rickets. How that want of pure air, of sunlight, and free movement of the limbs, of suitable food, produced a disease of the bones in which the lime salts were absorbed, leaving only the soft bendable gristle, and so on—but it was not any use : they knew nothing about pathology, or anatomy either. So we left that and went on to other matters.

The Afghan baby—among the rich—is wrapped up as to the head and neck by a stifling head-dress, rather like that which an Arab wears to protect him from the sun, and I could not make them understand the advantage of dispensing with a head covering indoors.

The cradle is a massive wooden concern. It consists of a hammock or shallow box, suspended at either end from a longitudinal bar supported on uprights, so that it will swing from side to side. When the child is asleep every breath of air is excluded by thick curtains, which fall from the bar over the sides of the cradle—and this in a hot climate. What could I say ? We differed in almost every detail ; there was no common ground to start from.

The Sultana had expressed her desire that the European doctor should attend the Prince medically. I saw a cheerful future before me, for I found that the nurses would diverge, not in the slightest degree, from the customs of their ancestors. It is possible to move a mountain—granted time and a sufficient amount of blasting material—but no amount of blasting will move an Oriental woman out of the rut that ages of custom has made.

The Sultana did not nurse her child. A nurse therefore was sought for to rear the little Prince.

Before the Hakims left my house the fat one

expressed his deep sense of gratitude that I had granted him my friendship, and he ended a polite speech by asking me to see a patient of his. I ought to have remembered the poet's lines :—

"I know a Hakim fair to see"
(Only he was dark and fat, but that does not matter)—"Beware!
He can both false and friendly be—Beware!
Trust him not, he is fooling thee."

I went to see the patient : he was one of the Chamberlains, Nasir Courbon Ali. He was exceedingly ill with malarial fever, and his skin was yellow, which was bad. I thought there was a chance of saving his life if vigorous remedies were used. I returned home and directed the compounder to prepare a mixture and deliver it himself. I visited the Nasir three times that day, but he did not seem to be improving. The next day he was worse. I had to go on to the Hospital, but when I returned home I said to the compounder,

"You sent the Nasir's medicine this morning?"

The compounder had picked up a little English from the Armenian. He said,

"No, sir, I forget it."

Forget it! I was exceedingly angry.

A man's life is in extreme danger, and you *forget!*"

Then he explained, or rather the Armenian did. When he had delivered the medicine he found the Hakim there : he left the medicine, noticing where it was placed ; he returned once or twice during the day, but found the bottle just as it had been left. Not a dose was given that day or afterwards. Why, therefore, did the fat old fraud ask me to go and see his patient? I do not know. The Nasir died the next day.

Towards the end of September the cases of malarial fever among the soldiers and townspeople began to decrease in number, and I had more leisure. I commenced to study Persian, with the occasional assistance of Munshi Amin Ullah, secretary to the British Agent. The Armenian was not, at that time, sufficiently learned to attempt to teach me. He had very vague ideas as to moods and tenses: and pronouns and prepositions bothered him considerably. I tried to teach him English. He knew the letters, but words, whose sound and meaning he knew well, baffled him completely when written. I found this was chiefly due to the fact that when he spelt out a word he pronounced it exactly as it was spelt. "Enough" was a complete stumper, because there was no "f" in it. He considered it ought to have been "enuf," and wished to argue the point with me; so that his English reading did not progress very rapidly. He spoke fluently in Hindustani and some of the other Indian languages, in Persian and Pushtu, and was picking up Turki while we were in Turkestan; English, too, he was becoming better acquainted with: all these he learnt by ear, but Hindustani and Persian he could both read and write.

About this time I found leisure to take up painting again. Rather fancying myself in Afghan turban and robes, I painted my portrait from the reflection in a hand-glass. It happened to turn out a success, and created quite a little mild excitement. The Armenian was not the man to let my light shine under a bushel: he looked upon me as a sort of possession of his. Anything that I could do and others could not, reflected, he seemed to think, a great deal of credit

upon him: so that he trumpeted the news abroad. I had a great many visitors, and every second one asked me to paint his portrait. The Armenian said:

"Sir, you not do. This man, who is?"

Which sentence, though it sounds odd, is simply a literal translation of the Persian, "Sahib, shuma ne kunēd. In mard, ki'st?"

However, I consented to paint my neighbour the Mirza Abdur Rashid, and he gave me some sittings. He had good features, and was dark-skinned for an Afghan, so that when attired in green velvet and gold he made rather a striking picture. The matter reached the ears of His Highness the Amîr, and he sent for the two portraits. They were taken to the Palace just as they were, though the Mirza's turban was unfinished. When the pictures were brought back I heard that His Highness was pleased with them. My own portrait I rolled up and addressed to England, intending to have it posted home by one of the British Agent's men, who was returning to India on leave. In the evening, just as I had addressed it, His Highness sent for it again.

I went to the military Durbar the next day, Tuesday: His Highness was very gracious. He spoke some time about the Moolah upon whom I had operated for goitre, and desired me to instruct the native dressers: then he spoke about the portraits, praising them highly, and finally told me that he would himself give me sittings for a portrait.

A day or two afterwards a carpenter arrived to take instructions for the making of a frame to stretch the canvas upon. The next day I caught a most severe cold. It was the end of October, the sky was

clouded for the first time, and the weather seemed suddenly to have become autumnal.

Though the canvas was soon ready it was a long time before I began the Amîr's portrait. The cold I had became better, but, after two or three days, instead of feeling well I felt much worse. I could not rouse myself to anything, and I had a constant backache. It struck me suddenly I might have fever. I had; rather severely. It was quite different in type from the first attack I had had. Unfortunately, a few days before, I had discharged my cook for some rascality or other, I do not remember what, and the only man who could cook in the European way for me was my syce, or groom. This was the man who had been in the Burmese Police, and who cooked dinner for me the day we went to Takh-ta-Pul. He could roast meat and make a rice pudding, but that was about the extent of his capabilities in the cooking line. With the fever on I did not seem to hanker after the grey, thin, greasy liquid he denominated "soup," neither did I seem to desire the slippery, sloppy, watery dish he called "custard" pudding. As bread was not to be obtained, but only the leathery chupatti, which is not appetizing when you are ill, the fact began to force itself upon me that I should be obliged to undergo the Hakim's treatment of fever—that of starvation.

However, in a day or two it reached His Highness's ears that I was ill. He at once ordered the two chief Hakims and all the Hindustani Hospital assistants to wait upon me, and discuss what could be done for my relief. It was kind and gracious of the Amîr; but it appeared to me that if I submitted to the treatment of all or any of them, I should be likely to find myself

in a great deal more danger of dying than there otherwise seemed any immediate probability of. But His Highness's thoughtful kindness was not exhausted. Hearing that food suitable for a sick European was not to be easily obtained from the bazaars, he gave orders to his chief Hindustani cook, a man who had been imported from one of the hotels in India, to prepare anything that seemed agreeable to me. The cook came every day for orders. I had soups, bread, beef tea, jellies, puddings, and fruit, and, in addition, His Highness sent me some claret and a bottle of Chartreuse.

I learnt a good deal about malarial fevers from a patient's point of view before I was well again, for I had three consecutive attacks of fever, each differing from the preceding one in its manifestations.

When I had been ill rather more than a fortnight, His Highness wrote me a very kind letter enquiring after my health; this is a translation of it:

"To the Honourable and Respected Dr. Gray,—

"May Almighty God grant you health and safety. I write to you for I wish greatly to hear of your health. My prayer to God is that I may see you always well and happy. "AMÎR ABDURRAHMAN,

"Finis." "I have written it."

At different times salaams and messages of condolence were received from the Commander-in-Chief and other people. I was gratified to hear that the soldiers and townspeople were wishing for my speedy recovery, for, certainly, it is a privilege to feel you have been of use.

I became better, and went for an hour's ride, which I enjoyed immensely, but the next day the second

attack came on violently. During this attack, when I was becoming better, I had the honour of receiving a Royal visit from the Amîr—by deputy.

His Highness sent one of his chief secretaries, Mir Ahmad Shah, a tall and courteous man. I received him, of course, in my bedroom, as I was not able to get up. He brought me many kind messages. His Highness had signified his intention of visiting me personally, but explained that he was prevented by his lameness and the press of State business. He was greatly pleased with the work I had already done in his service, and was convinced that I had no other motive or desire than to serve him faithfully. I endeavoured to express my gratitude for the honour His Highness had done me, and for the many kindnesses he had showed me while I was in his country.

The next day the secretary of the British Agent arrived, bearing the Sirdar's congratulations to me, upon being the recipient of such signal marks of His Highness's favour.

Some time before I was taken ill I had written to Dr. Weir, the health officer of Bombay, to whom I had been introduced when in India, for some vaccine lymph, and a day or two after my "Royal visit" I received a letter from him. He said that all our mutual acquaintances were well, but that he himself was suffering from a recurrence of the fever he had caught some years before in Turkestan! This was cheerful news, seeing that I had had the Turkestan fever five weeks already. I said to the Armenian,

"I suppose then this will stick to me for the rest of my days—even if I get better now, which seems doubtful"—for my liver was touched.

But the Armenian was equal to the occasion.

Oh, no : that fever my friend had was quite another kind : it was caught at such a place—I forget where he said—and was a very bad fever. Everybody knew that fever ; it came on sometimes years after. But this fever it was no-thing.

"Sir, if you very ill, how you can smoke papyrus —cigarette ?" and with other specious words did he beguile me. I got better after some days, and wrapping up carefully, for I concluded I must have got a chill the time before, went for a short ride. I was all right that day, and went out the next day for two hours, and came home feeling utterly fagged and aching in every bone. Back came the fever. The temperature chart, this time, was quite different from either of the other two.

The snow commenced, but we did not have very much, not more than we often have in England, but the winds sweeping across the plains were bitter. This attack lasted about a month. In the middle of it I heard that one of His Highness's Page boys, rather a favourite one, named Samander, had met with an accident. While out riding his horse had become unmanageable, and the boy's leg had been dashed against a tree.

The Hindustanis, who had been sent for, came to me to make their report. There seemed some doubt whether the leg was broken or not. They had, however, put on a splint, but when I asked what kind of splint, I found that it was one that was quite unsuitable if the leg were broken. There seemed nothing for it but to get up and dress and go off and see. Wrapping up well, and taking a

stick, I hobbled off with the Armenian for the Palace. The snow was not very deep, not more than six or seven inches.

I found Samander living in a Turkoman khirgar, in the Palace gardens. The khirgar was a circular dome-shaped wigwam, about fourteen feet across by fourteen feet high, and was made of a number of light but strong wooden uprights, which bent inwards seven feet above the ground, their ends fitting into a wooden ring above. It was covered over with thick felt and then with canvas. A wooden door was fitted on one side—this is not used in the summer—and a carpet hung over the door.

Around the khirgar was a small trench to carry off melted snow or rain. Inside, the floor was carpeted, and my patient was lying on a mattress on the ground. The khirgar was very warm, for in the centre was a large brazier with glowing charcoal. Light was to be obtained only by opening the door or by lighting a lamp. In the summer, when the felt-covering is dispensed with, light is obtained by pushing back a flap of canvas.

On the boy's thigh there was bandaged a wretched little splint, quite useless if the bone were broken. I soon had it off, and found that the bone was broken in the lower third. It took some little time to have a long splint made and to put it on. Several Page boys, who were living in other khirgars, came in, and also the official whose duty it is to look after the boys. When I was putting on the splint, I noticed the scar of a bullet in the upper part of the boy's thigh. I enquired how he had got it, and then I heard the story of the attempt upon

the life of the Amîr which had taken place the year before.

His Highness was reviewing the troops on the plains outside the town of Mazar. The pain of his sciatica was troubling him so that he was not on horseback, but sat in an arm-chair, which was placed on a large square mound or platform some four or five feet high, artificially made. His Highness sat smoking a cigarette, the Commander-in-Chief, Page boys, and officials were grouped around his chair, and seated on the ground by his side was Captain Griesbach, C.I.E., the geologist.

An Herati regiment was passing, and suddenly one of the men stepped out of the line, threw up his rifle, and fired point-blank at the Amîr. Just at that moment His Highness leaned over to speak to Captain Griesbach, and the bullet whizzed under his arm, through the chair back, and caught Samander just below the hip.

The Amîr continued what he was saying without a pause, and still smoked the cigarette. The Commander-in-Chief sprang instantly from the mound and rushed on the man to cut him down.

Then the Amîr shouted "Stop!" But it was too late, the Commander-in-Chief's sword flew to pieces on the man's head, and the bystanders instantly dispatched him.

The Amîr, presumably, wished to go into the matter, for the Herati was a known shot, and to enquire the motive of his action with a view of determining if he were alone in the plot. But whatever may have been suspected I never heard that anything definite was found out. It was,

however, an evil day for the officers of that regiment.

Samander receives a larger pay than any of the other Page boys, and is naturally somewhat of a favourite.

It was two hours before the splint was made and properly put on, and at the end of it I was quite done up. I found that the fact of my arrival had been reported to the Amîr, for His Highness most kindly ordered the palanquin of one of the Princes to be brought to the khirgar to convey me back to my house. I visited Samander once or twice after that to see that everything was all right, but my temperature began creeping up in a way that was not at all satisfactory, so that I had to give up going and simply trust to reports from the Hindustanis.

We had an earthquake a few days after this, at half-past five in the afternoon. The bed shook and the door and windows rattled, but it was quite a slight affair compared with the Kabul earthquakes. I called out to the Armenian, who was in the next room playing cards, to ask if he felt the shock. He came in to know if I wanted anything.

"Didn't you feel the earthquake?" I said.

"The what, sir?"

"The earthquake! Why, man, the house shook."

"Ah!" said he, "I did think a little the earth shivered, but I not notice."

On Christmas Day my fever departed. Some time before I had written to Mr. Pyne to ask him to send me a cook, if he could find one, and on Christmas Day a cook arrived bringing a box of newspapers, *Graphics* and *Punches*, and a case of briar pipes, which had reached Kabul from London.

The *Graphics* and *Punches* were a constant source of amusement to myself and my visitors, the older as well as the younger ones. I was astonished to find how little idea some of them had as to what a picture was intended to represent.

For instance, in one of the Christmas numbers—it was of the year before, but that didn't matter—a pig was represented standing up on his hind legs to take a view of the world outside his stye. Little Mahomed Omer, son of Perwana Khan, could not make the picture out at all; finally he came to the conclusion that it represented a horse in his stable. The Armenian allowed him to remain with that idea.

The pig is unclean to the Mahomedans, and he would have been very disgusted if he had thought that we ate such a nasty creature.

A frequent visitor at this time was a young man named Shere Ali, who was, I was told, the second son of the ex-Mir of Bokhara. A friendship commenced at that time between us which, like that of the Mirza Abdur Rashid, lasted till I left the country.

Shere Ali was greatly interested in "Misterre Punch." I had to go over the jokes and explain them to the Armenian—sometimes, in the more subtle ones, a matter of no little difficulty—and he translated them to Shere Ali in Persian. Shere Ali generally laughed, though I fancy from the little I had picked up of Persian, that the Armenian made his own point when he had missed mine. He was quite capable of both seeing and making a joke, as I found in after years when I brought him to London.

With the aid of the pictures I gave the Armenian vivid descriptions of London and the glories thereof. One day, somewhat to my surprise, he said :—

"Sir, let me see London. If I die then—don't matter !"

The officer who had charge of the Page boys, came to see me ; he was a short thick-set man, and sensible. He asked me many questions in surgery, and seemed willing to learn a few simple remedies in case of emergency. I was very glad to teach him.

At this time I was brought very low in the world as regards tobacco. I had been reduced to smoking in a pipe broken-up cigar stumps which, in view of this difficulty, I had carefully saved. Tobacco, except uncured, and to me unsmokable Persian tobacco, was not to be obtained in Mazar. I said to the Armenian, "I shall be cleaned out of tobacco soon—and then, Chaos !"

He said, "Sir, I not know Chaos, what is ; but Amîr Sahib has plenty of cheroot and cig-rette."

"That is very likely," I said, "but I haven't."

"You not care it, I write him, Amîr Sahib, and he give it you. What a few cigar or cig-rette ! no-thing !"

"No ! you must not do that," I said, "I can't cadge of His Highness."

"Sir, please you kind, you say nothing. *I* write, you not write."

Sure enough he did write. I confess I was rather ashamed when His Highness sent me ten boxes of most delicious Turkish cigarettes, four boxes of cigars, and a silver cigar-case and match-box.

His Highness had forbidden me to go out till I

was quite strong, and it was the 4th of January before I ventured to do so. I went to see Samander and found his leg was progressing satisfactorily.

On the 7th, it was a Tuesday, was a military Durbar, and after I had seen Samander and had tea with him, I determined to go on to the Durbar and pay my respects to His Highness: this was at eleven o'clock in the morning. It was the first winter Durbar I had ever been to.

The Armenian accompanied me. He was gorgeous to look upon, being attired in a white turban, a yellow leather postîn, and light blue trousers.

We walked from Samander's khirgar along the paths of the garden to the Palace. The trees were white with snow, and great icicles hung from the branches. The sky was grey, and the water and mud by the paths frozen hard. Everyone looked nipped up in the icy wind. In the far distance to the south were the mountains dimly blue.

In the open space opposite the Palace was a large crowd of people with petitions to offer or disputes to settle. Near at hand was the Amîr's guard with fixed bayonets. On each side of a large open window, which reached nearly to the ground, were secretaries and other Court officials. At the window sat His Highness.

The Armenian and I skirted the crowd and went towards the window, the crowd very politely making way for us.

I waited awhile, until His Highness had finished speaking, then when he saw me I took off the astrakhan busby I had on, went forward and bowed. His Highness enquired very kindly after my health,

expressed his pleasure at seeing me, and then directed me to come into the room where he was sitting.

I was very glad to do so, for in spite of my furs the bitter wind began to make me shiver.

I made my way through the door of the Pavilion into the centre hall or passage, turned off to the left, and raising the curtains over the door entered the room where His Highness was. Compared with the outside it was, in spite of the open window, delightfully warm.

His Highness was seated in an arm-chair facing the open window: at his left hand was a little table with a cup of tea on it. He directed a chair to be placed for me and some more tea to be brought. At first the pages placed my chair some little distance from the table, but His Highness ordered them to bring it near. While I was drinking the tea His Highness continued giving judgment in the cases brought before him.

Presently a man, apparently a carpenter, was ushered into the room, bearing in his hand a curiously shaped pair of wooden sandals with spikes of iron fixed into them. His Highness examined them, and then turning to me explained that he had invented these things himself, that they were to fasten on the boots to prevent a slip when one was out shooting among the mountains in the winter.

The Amîr looked very handsome. He was dressed in a postîn of dark purple velvet, trimmed and lined with a valuable fur, called in Persian Pari-pásha, I think a kind of sable. He had gold shoulder-knots, and a belt covered with bosses of gold. In his right trouser pocket he had a small nickel-plated revolver, for I saw him take it out when he was searching for

a seal to give to one of the secretaries. A fur rug was thrown over his knees, and he wore a beaver busby ornamented with a diamond star.

It was interesting to note the bearing and appearance of the different men as they came before him. Almost everyone, who was not attached to the Court, turned pale, some went white to the lips, or yellow if they were dark skinned. I understood so little Persian then, that I could not follow what was being said, and thus was unable to judge if there were any reason for this emotion, beyond the awe that the presence of majesty inspires.

Presently, with a suddenness that was quite startling, the Amîr turned to me, and said in Persian:—

"Men in autumn and winter are blown upon by *cold* winds, and at once take *hot* fever (tâp-i-gurrum). In your eyes, what is the reason of this?"

It seemed pedantry to talk pathology, and I spoke in a sort of parable. I said:—

"A gun is loaded with powder and shot, the trigger is pulled, the cap flashes, and the gun explodes. The men of this country are the guns; they are loading themselves with a poison rising from the earth by breathing it constantly, the malarial poison. A slight shock, the chill of the wind, brings about the explosion, and fever seizes them."

His Highness seemed struck by the plausibility of this explanation, and presently he said,

"Darûst, darûst, it is right!"

He asked me several other questions, but I am sorry I have forgotten what they were.

The room we sat in looked not unlike an English drawing-room. The windows, however, were

different. They were wider than English windows generally are : the larger ones were filled with plain glass, the smaller with coloured glass ; over the lower part of one large window was a sort of fretwork of wood, which, as the light was reflected from the snow outside, was rather a relief to the eye than otherwise. The door panels and the window jambs were somewhat elaborately carved : they were neither painted nor polished. Draped over the doors and by the side of the windows were silk curtains of different colours. The floor was covered with Persian and Turkestan rugs. The walls were white, and the ceiling decorated rather crudely with colours. The ceiling sloped up on each side to a beam, supported at each end by a slender wooden column carved in distinct imitation of a Corinthian column, but not fluted. Ranged against the wall were two or three arm-chairs covered with velvet, and some small tables with writing materials, vases, and lamps upon them. The table-covers were mostly of velvet embroidered with gold : one or two were Indian. In the middle of one wall was what looked like a white "overmantel," though there was no fireplace. This was more Oriental in appearance than the rest of the room, the keynote of the decoration being the Saracenic arch. On the shelves and in the recesses of this were small ornaments and vases of various kinds. Below this decorative arrangement, and in the position usually occupied by the fireplace, was a table covered with heavily embroidered velvet, and on it were two lamps and several brass candlesticks with many branches, each holding a wax candle, so that the whole looked rather like an altar in a High church. In the window

that had fretwork over it was arranged a bank of flowers in flower-pots. The centre of the room was clear, except that exactly in the middle was a large brass brazier filled with glowing charcoal.

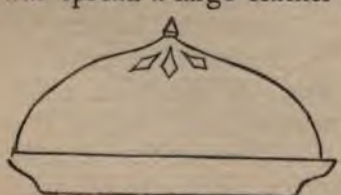
At the far end of the room, away from the Amîr, were seated, cross-legged on the ground, the chief officers of the army, with the exception of the Commander-in-Chief, who was ill.

At about two o'clock in the afternoon the Durbar was over, the petitioners and disputants disposed of, and His Highness arose. We all stood up.

His Highness did not leave the room, but took another chair in front of a small oblong table with a white table-cloth which the servants had brought in. I did not know whether I was to stop or go, and was debating the point in my mind, when the Armenian, who was standing behind my chair, leant over and whispered :—

"Sir, please you stop, Highness wish it."

His Highness sat at his table, and a small table with a table-cloth was placed in front of my chair. The officers sat where they were. In front of them was spread a large leather cloth, and over it a white



cloth—I was going to say "table-cloth," but it was on the ground. Then lunch, or breakfast, was brought in. The dishes were protected with curiously shaped covers, which were perforated in designs.

One or two were placed upon His Highness's table, and several more in front of the officers. His Highness helped himself, and then the dish was brought to me. A knife, fork, spoon, and plate were provided for me, though they are not used in the East except by Europeans.

I was glad of the fork and spoon, for in those days I had not learned how to eat pilau with my fingers. I was just in front of His Highness, and the Armenian told me that the servants—who really waited very well, considering—were reprimanded rather sharply by His Highness for not bringing me a clean knife and fork for each dish : they were not used to such things.

First, I had a sort of pancake, tasting something like that ancient sweetmeat called a " jumble " ; after that some meat, I didn't know what it was, cooked in a curious way ; then some pilau. Altogether I thought it very tasteful. Afterwards, they took away the white table-cloths and put others in their place, mine was blue velvet embroidered with gold, and fruit was brought, mostly grapes, which had been kept from the summer in cotton wool. His Highness lit a cigarette, and I, pulling out the silver cigar-case, lit a cigar. For the officers, the native chillim or hubble-bubble was brought and handed round to them one after another. Each drew a volume of smoke into his lungs and handed back the pipe to the servant, who, after blowing the smoke out of the tubes, passed it to the next guest.

Then the officers got up, salaamed, and filed off. I did not. I said to myself,

" I am a stranger, and it is the Armenian's

business to direct me: he has not hinted that the time has arrived to withdraw: meanwhile, I am very comfortable. If an error is being committed, on his head be it."

There was no occasion to disturb myself. Presently, tea was brought in and I had another cigar.

Meanwhile, His Highness was busily engaged: secretaries came in, spoke, received their directions and went. Letters or reports were brought singly and in bundles. His Highness opened them and generally answered each one there and then; writing his answer on the flyleaf of the letter or on the back of it. Then he placed it in a fresh envelope, fastened it down, addressed it and threw it on the ground. These letters were gathered up by one of the secretaries. Other letters, after he had read them, he handed over to a secretary to answer, but these were comparatively few.

In the midst of all this business a youngster, about ten years old, dressed in tunic, trousers, and turban, came into the room; as he entered the silence of the room, he piped out in his young penetrating treble the usual salutation,

"Salaam aleicoum," "God be with you."

The Amîr, who was engaged reading a letter, answered mechanically,

"W'aleicoum"—"and with you."

Then he looked up to see who it was: when he saw the small Page boy he said something in Persian, in which I recognized the word "Khunûk"—"cold." The boy disappeared and presently came back with a postîn on. I was rather struck that His Highness, in the midst of the great amount of

State business he transacts, should notice and give orders about such a small thing as the possibility of a little Page boy taking cold.

When the press of work was over, His Highness turned and addressed some very kind remarks to me. He said, among other things, that he had examined and found that I was more intent upon doing my duty and serving him faithfully than upon anything else. In future I was not his servant only, but his friend.

He appointed a time for me to vaccinate the little Prince Mahomed Omer, and—which concerned my comfort considerably—he, at a suggestion from the Armenian, ordered the Afghan bath-rooms attached to my house to be heated any or every day, whenever I wished. This is rather an expensive operation, and one to which, considerning the price of wood, my income hardly stretched. Wherefore, I was duly grateful. I had some more tea, finished my cigar, and then asked permission to withdraw. Before I left, His Highness desired me to visit the Commander-in-Chief, who was ill with fever. I bowed and retired. We came away at half-past four, and the Armenian was jubilant at His Highness's kindness and condescension. With Oriental exaggeration he said that no man had been so favoured as I.

"Highness very kind upon you: very much wish you," he said—meaning "like you," I suppose.

We visited the Commander-in-Chief, drank the necessary tea, and then I got home rather fatigued by the excitement and the exercise out of doors. I took off my furs and lit a pipe for a quiet evening,

but had to go out again to see a Page boy who was very ill with fever.

I was on the watch that evening and the next morning to see if I should have any return of fever myself. As there was none, I had my horse saddled, and started, after breakfast, on a visit to the Hospital, where I had not been able to put in an appearance for several weeks.

I enjoyed being out on horseback again. I was riding a young horse that the Amîr had given me. He seemed to enjoy being out also, for presently he began to toss his head and snort and plunge.

The Armenian said, sagaciously,

"Sir, he very fool horse."

The plunging was not sufficiently satisfying, and he commenced rearing and kicking. Unfortunately the fever, in addition to making my legs shaky, had taken a large slice off the normal amount of pluck that one ordinarily possesses, so that in proportion as his jubilation increased mine diminished.

The road was very lumpy and frozen hard, and it seemed to me that the "fool horse," in his lunatic caperings, must inevitably slip down and break my leg. There was an evil time to come. We had got through the Bazaar without any serious mishap when, just outside, we happened to come alongside of another man on horseback. This was what my "fool horse" desired; the very thing he was waiting for—he always was a regular bulldog for worrying with his teeth, and was a ruffian at striking: up he reared and simply pounced on the other horse. He caught him by the neck and shook him, and drove him up against a wall. Both reared upright, and then com-

menced the screams and the strikings of two incensed stallions. The other man was even less happy than I, for my brute was getting the best of it. I wondered which of us would be killed, and began to think it would be the other man.

The Armenian shouted,

"Sir, please you hit him with spur."

I hadn't a spur to "hit" with, for, knowing the horse would be "fresh," I had not put any on. I tore at his mouth with the curb, and hit him over the head with my fist. It seemed to astonish him, for he let go the other horse, and settled on his four feet again. It was all the other man wanted: he was out of sight round the corner before you could say "Parallelopipedon."

We got outside the town and had a large open space to cross. Some horses in the distance were neighing, and, of course, mine answered them shrilly and fiercely, and he tried to be off at a furious gallop to get another little boxing match. This I was able to put a stop to, fortunately, for the ground was much broken up and very slippery. Having nothing better to do, therefore, he reared and kicked again. We reached the Hospital at last, and, with shaking knees and a thankful heart, I dismounted.

There were a great many sick soldiers at the Hospital, some sixty or seventy. I was not yet strong enough to attend to them all, and I chose out about a dozen who were very ill.

Some of them were mere lads, and there they lay coughing and panting with acute inflammation of the lungs. It was in times like this that I missed so frightfully the well-appointed hospitals and the women nurses of England. The soldier attendants did their

best, no doubt, but very few showed any sympathy or gentleness with the sick. In many of the cases it was necessary for the patient to sit up for me to listen to the sounds of the chest. In England the nurse slips her arm under the shoulders and head of the patient and helps him up. Here a curt "sit up" was all. One or two could not do it, and I had to lift them.

Coming away I decided that the Armenian should ride the "fool horse" and I would take his. He said :—

"Oh, yes, sir, I can ride him, but I 'fraid we make late for your lunch. Better this—you take mine, I take soldier's horse. Other horse come afterwards. In my o-pinion we get home soon this way."

"Very well," I said, "*I* can't ride him home ; it is too much."

"Yes, sir," he answered, "it is *three* much! a little you not strong, and he very fool horse."

It was a long time before I could make him believe it was "*too* much, and not *two* much."

CHAPTER XV

THE AMIR'S CONVERSATION

Sent for to the Palace. Fragility of Europeans. The Amir's postîn. The Bed-chamber. The King's evening costume. The guests. The Amîr's illness. School in the Durbar-room. The Amîr's conversation. Companies of Khans: the water supply of London: plurality of wives. The Amîr is bled. Further conversation. His Highness a physician in Turkestan: an iron smith: a goldsmith. Drawing. Discussion as to the Amîr's portrait. Amîr's choice of costume. The Shah of Persia. Portraits of the Shah in ignominious places. The rupee and the Queen's portrait. Cigar holders. Concerning Afghan hill-men. Dinner. The Amîr's domestic habits. Amîr's consideration for subordinates. Conversation concerning European customs. The new Kabul. Native drugs. Soup and beef tea. The paper trick. Page-boys with fever. The Kafir Page. European correspondence. Vaccination of Prince Mahomed Omer. Afghan women. The Prince's house: his chamber: his nurse. The Prince. The operation. Abdul Wahid. Afghan desire for vaccination. The Armenian's useful sagacity. An Afghan superstition. The dreadful old lady and her suggestion. The nurse's remark. The Agent's secretary. His comments upon Bret Harte: the meaning of "By Jove"; the Christian belief in the Trinity. European "divorce" from an Oriental point of view: plurality of wives.

THAT evening, about seven o'clock, a messenger came from the Palace saying that the Armenian was wanted at once by Amir Sahib. I was a little startled, wondering if anything had gone wrong. About half-an-hour afterwards the Armenian, accompanied by a soldier with a lantern, returned, and said that His Highness wished to see me.

Outside it was dark and freezing, and His Highness had been kind enough to send by the hand of the Armenian a postîn for me, lest I should take a chill again and have a return of fever. For, as the

Armenian put it, "Highness say Afghan is stone man, heat is not hurt it, cold is not hurt it; but European very soft man, likes flower, soon cold is take it."

The postîn, of crimson velvet lined with a valuable fur called in Persian "khuz"—I think a species of marten—was made to fit the noble proportions of the Amîr. On my lean figure it showed to better advantage wrapped round as a cloak.

Guided by the soldier with his lantern, we reached the Palace and waited a minute or two in the anteroom: presently a Page boy came out and called me in. I wondered what could be the matter. But it occurred to me that it could not be anything disagreeable, or His Highness would not have sent me his own postîn.

I was shown into His Highness's bedroom—at least, so I conjectured, though it bore no resemblance to our ideas of a bedroom. It was a smaller room than the one I had been in at the Tuesday's Durbar, and on the other side of the centre hall or passage.

At one end of the room was His Highness, seated on a divan or broad couch which was covered with furs. In front of him was what looked like a large ottoman covered with a quilt which was partly concealed by a cover of Indian embroidery. This was a "sandali," and underneath was the charcoal brazier. On the divan were piled cushions and large pillows covered with velvet and silk brocades.

His Highness wore a small white turban of Indian muslin: over his shoulders was thrown a robe of crimson silk lined with fur, and almost covered with gold embroidery. The room was brilliant with innumerable wax candles. Two brass candlesticks

with branches stood on the sandali, and many more were placed round the room. It was a very striking scene. Several Page boys were standing at the far end of the room—there was no talking or whispering—and, at a sign or word from His Highness, one of them moved silently to do as he was told. Seated on the ground at the side of the room, about midway between His Highness and the Page boys, were three of the Court: one was the Sirdar Usuf Khan, the Amîr's uncle; another was the Master of the Horse, Sirdar Abdullah Khan; and the third, my old friend, General Nasir Khan.

I bowed to His Highness and he ordered a chair to be placed for me: then tea was brought.

His Highness said that he hoped I should suffer no inconvenience from the night air, and that he had asked me to visit him as he was suffering from a severe chill. He had studied many Persian books on medicine, he told me, and was intending to take certain medicines. He took the trouble to show me the medicines and explain their action. I asked permission to make an examination of his temperature and condition, and found he had four degrees of fever (102·4 F.). Granting that the medicines acted as he supposed, he was adopting a rational line of treatment, and I told him so, explaining, at the same time, that I had not studied the action of the remedies he spoke of. He talked to me for some time and told me, amongst other things, that he had studied medicine while he was an exile in Russia. He said that he never learnt Russian, but that he could talk Persian, Arabic, Pushtu, and Turki.

By-and-by sweetmeats and fruit were brought in,

pomegranates and pears, oranges, grapes, and dried fruit. His Highness offered me a cigarette, or rather directed one of the Pages to do so, and I smoked while he spoke to me. At about nine o'clock His Highness indicated that he felt inclined to sleep, and I was permitted to retire.

The next morning at eleven o'clock I was sent for again. It was snowing fast and I had to put a plain cloak over my finery, leaving it, of course, in the anteroom when I reached the Palace. I found His Highness very little better; he was feverish and still had pain in the shoulders and back. He said he had had a very restless night, with much fever. The attendants said he had been delirious, but I doubt if they knew what they were talking about.

After talking to His Highness for a short time we all retired to the Durbar room and His Highness got a little sleep. For us the inevitable tea was brought, and I smoked cigars and talked to the Armenian. There were several small Page boys in the Durbar room; they were seated cross-legged on the ground round the charcoal brazier and were receiving lesson in reading and writing. One or two were handsome boyish boys, and another was very pretty, but in face more like a little Italian girl than a boy.

At half-past one breakfast—in my case lunch—was brought in. It was practically a repetition of Tuesday's, except that His Highness was not there. After lunch I smoked on till I had finished all the cigars I had in my pocket, and then one of the Chamberlains, my friend, Shere Ali Khan, brought me some cigarettes. We had tea again, two sweet cups, and half a cup without sugar.

At four o'clock in the afternoon I was called in to His Highness. He still had some fever, but felt better. There were several people in the room. Beside the Pages there were the two chief Hakims, Abdul Wahid and Abdur Rashid, and other people, some of whom I knew and some I did not. All were seated on the ground round the room, and everyone was very still.

His Highness addressed his conversation to me. He told me much about the customs of the Russians that he became acquainted with when he was in exile; and he asked me many questions about London. He seemed to know a good deal about it himself. He described, for the benefit of the listeners, an English custom in which gentlemen—Khans—of wealth, band themselves together for the purpose of trade, and that each band is called "a Comp'ny." He asked much about the water supply of London, enquiring whether it were a Government undertaking, or managed by a Comp'ny of Khans, and he dropped a remark or two that showed me he had taken the trouble to secure previous information on the subject.

The conversation drifted to many subjects, and I remember he proved—though I do not say entirely to my satisfaction—how much better it was to have five wives than one. So that, although I was at the Palace purely in a professional capacity, I found myself being entertained by the Royal patient in most interesting conversation. At last he said I must be tired, having spent the whole day at the Palace. I need scarcely say that the enjoyment of listening to His Highness, and adding what I could to his stock of information, quite made up for any ennui I

may have felt while smoking innumerable cigars and cigarettes in the Durbar room.

We got home about six in the evening. I had then to go and see my neighbour, the Mirza Abdur Rashid, who had sent to my house several times. He had fever again. I did not call on the Commander-in-Chief a second time while he was ill, as I found he preferred trusting himself to the skill of the hereditary physicians of his country, the Hakims.

The next morning I went to the Palace again. His Highness said he was better: certainly he had no fever, but he looked uncommonly ill. He told me that, feeling very feverish and oppressed in the evening after I had left, he ordered a vein in his arm to be opened and a quantity of blood to be withdrawn. He expressed himself as feeling considerably relieved by the operation.

In the afternoon, at half-past four, when I went again to see him, His Highness seemed to have recovered somewhat from the blood-letting, and was in very good spirits. He related many interesting details of his life when he was in exile in Samarcand and Tashkend. He told me that after having read up the ancient Greek system of medicine as set forth in the Persian books at his command, he practised as a Physician among the natives of Russian Turkestan: that in his spare time he worked at the forge to learn the manufacture of war materials: that he learnt the details of gunpowder manufacture, and even worked at the more delicate and artistic handicraft of the goldsmith. He said that he tried to learn drawing, knowing that the art can be applied to so many uses, but that he never was able to succeed. He praised my

capabilities in that line in the complimentary language of an Oriental, and asked me to show those in the room how one began a drawing.

I asked what should I draw? He left that entirely to me. A paper and pencil being brought, I made a sketch of a man's head, and handed it to His Highness. He looked at it critically, and said that the only improvement he could suggest was that the eyebrows should be a little heavier. After I had corrected this he approved entirely, and a Page boy took the sketch round to every one in the room.

"Wah, wah!" they said, in admiration.

The King had approved; the Courtiers admired.

His Highness then said that the only thing he could ever draw was a tree in the winter-time. I asked him if he would honour us by showing us how a tree should be drawn. He took the paper and pencil and drew two trees excellently. I intended to have asked His Highness to give me the sketch, for it was really drawn for my benefit, but one of the Courtiers was too clever for me, and he annexed it. I did not like to ask then, for I knew the man would get into trouble if I did.

His Highness desired me to commence a portrait of himself as soon as he was well enough to sit. I said it would give me very great pleasure to do so. There was a discussion then, in which the Courtiers joined, as to the size the painting should be. Some suggested that it should be an equestrian portrait, life size; others that it should be of the King sitting: and many different costumes were suggested, all more or less gorgeous. I said that I had only enough canvas for a "head portrait." His Highness said that if I would make out a list of anything I wanted

in the way of canvas, brushes, and paints, he would order them to be brought from Bombay at once. I finally suggested that a head portrait should be finished first, and if His Highness approved of it a "full length" could be done afterwards. His Highness had never sat for a painting, and I think that he scarcely realized what an undertaking it is to sit for a full length life-sized portrait. As regards costume, His Highness said he preferred a plain coat and a fur bushy. Embroidery and bright colours, he said, were more fit for women and boys than men.

Afterwards he told us many interesting stories about the Shah of Persia and other people. The Shah he did not take at all seriously, and, in particular, he laughed at the custom there is in Persia of putting a portrait of the Shah on almost everything; even on utensils that are used for ignominious purposes. He described the Persians as not at all cleanly persons.

It is to be noted that the Amir will allow no representation of himself on vessels, stamps, or coins, and when I learnt this I confess I was surprised that he wished his portrait painted. However, when the portrait was eventually finished, it was apparently looked upon as an effigy or representation of Royalty, and, as you shall hear presently, was treated with some ceremony and no little respect. While he was speaking about the Shah, he happened to take up an Indian rupee, and was spinning it about on the sandali in front of him. Suddenly he said, as he picked it up—

"How old was Queen Victoria when this portrait was taken?"

I hesitated a moment : it was a difficult question to answer. Finally I said,

"It is intended to represent the Queen, but it is not a portrait of Her Majesty as she is now, nor, I believe, as she was when she was young."

His Highness at once said,

"You are right ; every feature is incorrect—eyes, nose, and mouth ; and even the crown on her head is not the crown she wears."

It was impossible for me to explain, through the Armenian, that the impression on the coin was a heraldic decoration, and was not meant for an exact portrait of Her Majesty.

Meanwhile, fruit and sweets were brought, and I lit a cigar. When I had smoked to the stump, I stuck my pocket-knife in to hold it by.

His Highness said, "Have you no cigar-holder ?"

On hearing I had not, he gave some directions to a Page boy. The boy disappeared, returning presently with about a dozen cases. His Highness opened the cases, examined them, and then, choosing two, gave them to me.

They were meerschaum and amber cigar-holders, the case being stamped with the name of a firm in Bombay. One was in the shape of a hand holding an oval, and the other was straight with a prancing horse carved on the top of it. They looked so beautifully pure in colour that it seemed a pity to defile them with tobacco smoke. However, æsthetic ideas did not prevail, and before long I had coloured them both a rich brown.

By-and-by I began to think it must surely be getting somewhere near dinner time, when just then the clock struck—it was ten p.m. However, it was

not yet the hour for the Amîr's second meal, and he continued conversing. He told me of the habits and customs of the Afghan hillmen; of their agility and hardiness, their great stature and bodily strength: that with them meat was a luxury to be obtained only by the few and by them rarely; of the weapons they manufactured for themselves, their love of fighting, and their love of robbery. I said,

"They must be good stuff to make soldiers of."

"Yes," said His Highness, "but they needed taming."

A little before midnight dinner was brought. The Amîr has two meals in the day: one about mid-day and the other about midnight. Occasionally the time is varied. He may breakfast at ten a.m. and dine at nine or ten p.m. He takes a cup of tea on rising, and, as a rule, some biscuits—macaroons and other sweet cakes—are brought, though he seldom eats them. At breakfast and dinner he eats as heartily as one would expect a robust man to do, but not more so. The *pièce de résistance* being pilau, which consists largely of rice, I think that the Amîr does not eat so much meat in the day as an ordinary Englishman. He drinks water only, at meals. Tea he drinks in the early morning and in the afternoon, and, curiously enough, tea is usually brought half-an-hour before and sometimes half-an-hour after a meal. There is no set rule as regards tea drinking. It is taken at all hours of the day, except with meals.

When dinner was brought, a tray was placed before His Highness on the sandali. A small table was brought for me, and the Courtiers sat on the ground.

The Armenian, who had had a little fever the day before, had been standing behind my chair all this

time—rather more than seven hours—and translating. He looked fagged to death. His Highness happening to notice him standing while everyone was sitting, said, "Sit and eat."

The Armenian, however, did not care to take the Amîr at his word and excite the resentment of the Courtiers, the Chief Secretaries, and officers, by joining them, and, moreover, he felt shame at presuming to sit eating in the presence of the Amîr, so that he made some excuse. His Highness, seeing his embarrassment, ordered dinner to be served for him in another room.

When dinner was over I asked permission to retire, and His Highness gave orders for a guard with lanterns to conduct me to my door. We got home at half-past one.

The next day, Sunday, I spent in a similar way at the Palace. I found His Highness better. After being with him a short time I withdrew to the Durbar room, where lunch was served for me.

I was called in again in the afternoon, and His Highness continued his conversation. He spoke much about European customs, and surprised me by the extent and accuracy of his knowledge. The Courtiers sat listening, dumb with admiration at the "boundless knowledge of the great King." He told me of the city of his dreams, the new Kabul, that he hoped to build in the Charhardeh Valley, drawing a plan of the city and of its fortifications. I enquired whether there were materials for building near at hand; and asked where he would get his water supply from, and so on, and he entered into all the details most willingly.

He gave me further information about the Afghans as a nation: though he described more their obvious characteristics than those that are unknown to European investigators. He sent for samples of native drugs and plants, and instructed me in their alleged action on the human body.

At dinner, soup was brought for my especial benefit, for the Amîr knew that Europeans took soup before meat when they dined. The conversation then turned upon the making of soup, and His Highness sent for the cooking utensils that were used by his cook and described the process to me. I did not know how soup was made, but I knew how to extract the nourishing properties of meat, and I described the making of "beef tea," giving the reasons for each step in the process.

After dinner—I forget what led up to it—I asked for a piece of paper and a pair of scissors, and having cut a square the size of the palm of my hand, I said to His Highness that I could cut a hole in it big enough to put my head through: would he ask his Courtiers if they could do the same. One after another they took the paper, and the Amîr seemed much amused as they turned it every way, and finally declared the thing was impossible. It was given back to me and I made the usual cuts. One down the middle and others alternately from the middle cut and from the outer edge—this fashion Of course, it would go over my head then. The Amîr enjoyed immensely the astonishment and discomfiture of the Courtiers, and laughed heartily as he mocked and jeered at them.

All this time the little Page boys had to be

standing, and they looked dreadfully tired. One of them, the Amîr's favourite, had fever. He was a slave from Kaffristan, about fourteen, named Malek. He was fair-skinned and quite like an English boy in face, though he wore two large emeralds looped in each ear by a ring of gold.

There was a hard frost that night, and we did not get home till half-past two.

The next morning, when I arrived at the Palace, I found His Highness was asleep, so I betook myself to Samander's khirgar or wigwam. It was as well I went, for I found he had fever. I took the opportunity also of prescribing for the favourite Page, Malek. He was a nice lad, and I had a chat with him. He seemed to be quite proud that he was not a Mahomedan in religion, though he couldn't quite tell me what he was. He remembered only a few words of his native language.

Afterwards he became a very good friend to me. He had infinite tact, and if I wished to call the attention of His Highness to any matter without making a formal report, Malek was always ready to choose the fitting moment in which to speak to His Highness.

I did not see the Amîr that day, for he was engaged, busily and alone, answering European correspondence. I heard, however, that he was much better.

On the following day, Tuesday, His Highness held the usual military Durbar. He sat at the window of the Palace enveloped in furs. When I arrived, he desired me to examine the throat of a woman who was there, unveiled, among the petitioners, and diagnose the disease she was suffering from. When

I had given my report, His Highness invited me into the Palace and I lunched with him as before. He asked me why I had ceased, since my recovery from fever, from sending to his kitchen for lunch and dinner. He desired me to continue sending, so long as I remained in the country.

After that the Amîr's cook waited upon me daily at my house to receive orders.

A day or two after this, on Sunday, January 19th, I was called before daybreak to vaccinate the little Prince, Mahomed Omer. The very fat man, Hakim Abdur Rashid, came for me while I was dressing; the servants prepared tea and then we started. The Prince was not living in the harem with his mother, the Sultana: he had a house of his own not very far from mine.

The Hakim waddled by my side, talking and talking, and panting, and still talking in his unctuous voice, and I stalked on in the darkness. Dawn was so near that we brought no lanterns, and before we reached the house the light of morning was gleaming on the snow. At the high gate, leading to the gardens, was a sentry with fixed bayonet.

Just as we reached the gate an old "sakabi," or water-carrier, was passed in by the sentry. Before he was allowed to cross the gardens with his leather water-bag to fill the house deghchis, or water-pots, the sentry made him unloose his turban and droop the end of it over his eyes so that he could see on the ground only.

"Women about?" I said to the Armenian.

"Yes, sir. Highness' sister here and other lady."

"Shall we see them?" I asked.

"Sir. Please you not talk. Perhaps this fat man understand. Highness make angry if he hear."

Our eyes were not bandaged, though the Armenian and I were a good deal younger than the "sakabi." The fat Hakim did not count. We crossed the garden and went up some steps into a lobby, and the Hakim called out:—

"Kussi ast?" "Any one here?"

A door on our right opened and the old Hakim, Abdul Wahid, appeared, and raising a curtain ushered us into the room.

The usual charcoal brazier stood in the middle of the carpet, curtains hung by the windows and over the doors.

The curtain over a doorway, at the far side of the room, was slightly pulled back, and, though we could see no one, it was here I heard that the ladies were concealed.

Seated by the side of the brazier was a fair young woman with a baby on her knee. These were the little Prince and his nurse. There were two older women, also nurses, seated by the fire. None of the women were veiled, but each had a cashmere shawl over her head, which she pulled slightly across the lower part of the face. All rose as we entered.

The Prince was a bright-eyed healthy-looking little fellow, with a skin slightly darker than that of an English baby. He was very much swaddled-up in clothes. Over his head was thrown a square of white cashmere, which was held back from the face and kept in position by a band round the head.

A chair and a little table were placed for me, and the inevitable tea was brought.

The Hakim and nurses sat on the ground again. The Armenian remained standing.

Presently, I said to the Armenian, "I am quite ready now to vaccinate the Prince."

It was broad daylight by this time, and I had my lancet and vaccine lymph with me.

The Armenian spoke to the Hakim Abdul Wahid, and he directed the nurse to undress the child sufficiently to expose the upper arm. The nurse commenced to unfasten the innumerable strings and bandages in which the Prince was bound up. As this operation needed both her hands, of course it was not her fault that the shawl fell back from her face. She was really a very pretty girl. She had a little crimson jacket, a long white camise reaching to the knee, loose oriental trousers, and a little gold embroidered cap, like a polo cap, put coquettishly on one side: the embroidered cashmere shawl draped from the head over the shoulders. As she sat with the child on her knee and the early sun shining on them, it struck me what a picture they would make for the Madonna and Child.

The two old ladies were not so smartly dressed. They had dark-grey shawls and a sort of hood on the head. They looked like nuns and acted as a "foil" to the nurse.

When the little Prince's arms were free, he waved them about and crowed joyously. As he lay on the nurse's lap I was obliged to sit on the ground to vaccinate him. The operation did not

take many seconds. He looked somewhat astonished when he felt the first prick of the lancet: possibly it was the first sensation of pain he had ever experienced, and he gave a little whimper before I had quite finished. Then his arm was bound up and he was dressed again.

When we came away, the portly Abdur Rashid took a ceremonious and courtly leave, but Abdul Wahid walked part of the way home with me. He did not talk. He was dressed in pure Afghan costume of the plainest kind. A loose brown coat or robe reaching to the knee, plain blue turban and a thin brown cloak, or lungi, of camels' hair draped in classic folds over his shoulders.

I never saw anyone who could throw the end of the cloak over the left shoulder so negligently, and yet have it fall in such folds as he could.

The old Hakim departed on his way home, and we met the "Master of the Carpets," Bai Mahomed Khan. He apparently had been lying in wait for us, and he begged me to come to his house and vaccinate his infant son. As I had plenty of lymph we went on to his house to do so. We waited in the porch while he went in to drive all the women away; consequently, the child had to be undressed and held by a man-servant. In the afternoon, two of the little Prince's Kaffir slave boys were sent to my house to be vaccinated; and on succeeding days several more were sent for the same purpose.

Many people, even those not attached to the Court, came and asked, as a favour, that I would vaccinate their children. Some cases I was, of necessity, obliged to postpone until I could get a

further supply of lymph. In Kabul, I saw many people suffering from the frightful results of that dread disease, Small-pox, when it seizes upon those unprotected by vaccination. In England, where vaccination is so universal, it is rare to see a bad case.

I visited the Prince every day for about a fortnight. Abdul Wahid generally met me at the house. He and I were to attend to the Prince's health and up-bringing. Abdur Rashid did not appear after the first visit. I did not vehemently press European innovations after the first day or two, for the Armenian said, with useful sagacity :—

"Sir, suppose you take away bandages and head coverings, and curtains, and Shahzada Sahib take cold, blame come upon you. Better you let the women do in Afghan custom, then no harm come for you."

I took his advice, and the more willingly, because none of my suggestions had, hitherto, produced the slightest effect. For immovable obstinacy there is nothing to match the conservatism of an Eastern woman.

I soon became friendly with the little Prince, and trotted him on my knee, or walked about the room with him in my arms. I never kissed him, for I thought it better to consider the religious scruples of the Sultana. Being a Feringhi there was always a chance that I *might* have eaten pig.

One day he was very merry, and was laughing when I said good-bye and left the room. Immediately one of the old nurses followed me out and begged a hair from my head, so that no evil should result from my having left him while he was laughing. The hair was burnt with due ceremony.

This old lady asked me one day if I were not very "dek"—*ennuié*—living alone in a strange land. She said,

"Why do you not buy a little Kaffir girl with a white skin, and make her your wife?"

I said I was betrothed to an English girl.

"England!" she said, "that is a far journey from here. Take to yourself a wife in Afghanistan, and your English wife can remain in England."

You wicked old lady! I thought. I said,

"It is not the custom of my country, and is forbidden by our religion."

She laughed.

I began to get afraid of this old lady.

Another day the younger nurse volunteered a remark. She asked me—Were there in England any women as beautiful as she, with skin as white and eyes as dark.

The old ladies remarked that her question was exceedingly ill-bred, and one likely to cause offence to me.

The Armenian told her that she, and such as she, were not fit to carry the shoes of an English lady. I said he was quite right: so she was snubbed all round. However, she did not seem to mind, for she sat and smiled to herself.

Meanwhile, I was continuing my Persian lessons, whenever Munshi Amin Ullah, the Agent's secretary, could spare an hour to visit me. One day I persuaded him to read "Bret Harte" aloud to me. It was delicious to see this highly-educated Mahomedan—he was an excellent fellow—sitting cross-legged on the ground, solemnly declaiming the "Heathen Chinee."

As I laughed, I said, "By Jove! it *is* funny!"

He said he thought it was very difficult and very incorrect English. I told him that was just where the joke came in. He smiled politely, and asked why I said "By Joe!" He had often heard Englishmen use the expression, and knew that Joe was an abbreviation of Joseph, though why we should say "By Joe," or who Joe was, he had not heard. I explained the origin of the expression, and described Jove as the god of the Romans.

I asked him if he had considered the Christian Religion. He told me he had studied the Jewish Bible and the Christian Testament. He could not understand how a race so intellectual as the English could accept the—to him—incomprehensible idea of three Gods. I said that Christians believed in one God only, and I endeavoured to illustrate the Trinity in Unity by describing the trinity that exists in every man: of will, intellect, and deed. To do anything one must first have the wish, or will, from that is begotten the thought how to do it, then comes the deed. He did not discuss the point.

He said another thing that puzzled and surprised him considerably was the custom among the English of selling their wives. I said,

"But Englishmen do not sell their wives."

"Yes," he said, "and, moreover, it is published in the newspapers when they do so."

"What on earth do you mean?" I asked.

"I mean this: an English woman becomes wearied of her husband, and prefers another to him. The man who is preferred is called a 'co-respondent.' Straightway they go before the Kasi—the Magistrate, and, after much discussion, it is decided at what price

the co-respondent shall buy the woman. The money is then paid to the husband."

This gave me a sort of shock.

"People of my race," he continued, calmly, "do differently. When a woman prefers another to her husband—they kill her."

I asked if he were married. He said "No."

"Do you," I said, "consider that a plurality of wives is to be desired?"

"Among people of my race," he replied, "a plurality of wives is lawful; but that which is lawful is not always expedient."

"In what way is it inexpedient?" I asked.

"Firstly, there is the question of expense. Secondly, a plurality of wives is a source of constant annoyance and anxiety. One wife will live in peace with her husband; but with two or more, there is no peace: for ever they are quarrelling."

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIRST SITTING

Morning prayers. Early tea. The weather. Breakfast. The first sitting for the Amîr's portrait: difficulties to contend with. The Courtier's criticism. The Amîr's rebuke. The Deputation. Conversation with the Amîr: the climate of England and Australia: differences in the time of day: the cause of clouds. Awe of the Courtiers. The favourite Page-boy's privileges. The newspaper paragraph: the Amîr's comment. Serious incident at a sitting. The Captain's toothache. Present of a rifle from the Amîr. The shooting expedition and its dangers. Courage of the "Burma policeman." The eccentric rider. The singing Afghan. The scenery of Mazar. Salutations in the market place. The meeting with Prince Amin Ullah.

A DAY or two after the vaccination of the Prince, His Highness sent word that he would be prepared to give me a sitting for his portrait on the following day.

Paint-box, canvas, and easel were therefore taken to the Palace at once.

The next morning I woke up as usual about six, opened the windows of the inner room and the top sash of one of the outer windows, to let in the light and air. I could hear Hafiz, the compounder, who was a Priest, reciting aloud his prayers in the servants' room. It took him, as a rule, an hour and a half to two hours to say his prayers in the early morning. During my illness I had had the Armenian sleep on the floor of my room, and the noise I made in opening the windows woke him.

"Sir, how do you do?" said he.

"I open the windows," I said. "That is how I do."

"Sir, why you not call me? I open windows."

"Open them, then," I said.

"Sir!" said he, "my wish is not I get up."

I went to the door of the servants' room. Hafiz stopped his prayers to say, "Sir?" I told him to bring me some tea. He boiled the water, and brought me some tea in a very short time, then went on with his prayers.

I wanted to continue a letter home, but it was too dark to see till half-past seven. Outside it was snowing fast: there was a dull and leaden looking sky, and it was bitterly cold. The weather had been very changeable. We had had rainy, muggy days, hot sunshiny days, snowy days, and bitterly cold, dull, windy days, one after another. The result was that people went about sneezing or coughing. At eight I had my breakfast, hot bread and milk, and then went off to the Prince's house to see that his arm was progressing satisfactorily. From there I went on to the Palace. It had ceased snowing, and the clouds had broken.

His Highness asked, Where should he sit? I found I had considerable difficulties to face. There was no platform to raise my sitter level with the eye, nor any way in which I could get a suitable top light which would cast some shadow under the eyebrows and chin. I had to do the best I could with the ordinary light from a large window. The most serious obstacle was the reflection *upwards* from the snow outside.

His Highness sat exceedingly well, and the Courtiers and Pages clustered in a group round, as

I made my charcoal sketch of His Highness on the canvas. It came very well—I can draw a good deal better than I can paint—and the Courtiers said, "Wah! Wah!" One of the chief secretaries, however, ventured a criticism on the drawing of the eyebrow. When he had finished what he had to say, I bowed and offered him the charcoal to continue the drawing. He seemed rather taken aback, and said—No, no, he could not draw. The Amîr told him not to make a fool of himself before an Englishman.

I thought the "drawing in" would be enough for one sitting, and when I had just finished a Deputation of citizens from one of the neighbouring towns arrived; they waited upon His Highness to petition him concerning a tax that had been imposed. I did not understand all the details, but His Highness told them to dig for gold on the banks of the Oxus. There is alluvial gold there: for I afterwards bought several hundred pounds worth.

When the Deputation had departed lunch was brought in, and afterwards, while I was smoking, His Highness asked me much about the climate of England, and compared it with that of Australia. He spoke of the difference in the time of day in those two countries at any one given moment. He also discussed the cause of clouds in the sky, and the Courtiers listened in awed astonishment.

I came away about half-past three in the afternoon, and Malek, the favourite Kaffir Page boy, came out with me. I had a rough whitethorn walking stick in my hand, that a friend had cut out of a hedge and saved for me in England. Malek asked why I carried such a stick, and I explained. He

thought it a poor stick for a gentleman to carry, and ran in and brought me out one of His Highness's walking-sticks. I said to the Armenian :—

"Is this correct ?"

"Yes," he said, "Malek can do so."

I haven't the stick now, for someone "annexed" it a few months afterwards.

The next day one of the Hospital assistants got into trouble. He gave a patient too much strychnine : however, he was not punished.

During a sitting shortly after this, His Highness told me of a report he had had from his Agent in Calcutta, concerning a paragraph in a newspaper there. It stated that I had given an opinion to the effect that His Highness was suffering from gout in the stomach, and could not live more than five years. As a matter of fact, I had given no such opinion. His Highness told me not to allow my mind to be distressed, as he considered either the report or the paragraph to be false.

At another sitting an incident occurred which might have given rise to a serious mishap. It occurred in this way : I was working at the watch chain, but presently His Highness moved and the chain became disarranged. Without thinking where I was—for I was absorbed in the painting—and acting as if he were an English gentleman and not an Oriental Prince whose life had already been attempted, I walked suddenly up to the Amîr to re-arrange the chain. There was a dead silence, though I hardly noticed it at the time, but I saw that the Amîr looked very hard at me. Then with a bow I went back to my work. Nothing was said.

When we reached home the Armenian told me that he and every one else in the Court were exceedingly startled by my walking suddenly up to His Highness. He was just as likely to have shot me as not. It was contrary to etiquette to approach near uninvited; and the suddenness was so very suggestive of evil designs. However, His Highness was not seriously annoyed. He saw at once that I meant no evil, nor any disrespect.

When I went to the Prince's one morning, I was informed that the Sultana wished me to paint her little son's portrait. He was not to be painted as a baby four or five months old, but sitting upright with a tunic and busby on, like his father, the Amîr. The tunic and busby were then being made. This seemed likely to be a difficult task.

I was accompanied back to my house by the Captain of the Prince's Guard, who had had a very severe toothache for some days, and he came to have the tooth out. He was a very large Afghan, much taller than I, but he was very nervous about the operation. I sat him in the chair, selected my forceps, put my arm firmly round his neck and pushed the forceps well home.

He screamed, slid down in the chair, and kicked violently. It was no use, however: I had him firmly, and the tooth too. He thanked me very profusely when the operation was over.

At the next sitting, His Highness asked if I were fond of shooting. The Armenian at once answered, that it was the one particular delight of my soul. His Highness said he would send a rifle to my house, so that I might ride out on the plains and

have some antelope shooting. Accordingly, the next afternoon, when the rifle arrived, the Armenian and I, accompanied by a servant, started on our expedition. We rode through the city, my horse going beautifully, as quiet as a trotting camel, till we reached the plain. Then, suddenly, he gave a scream, sprang up in the air, flung out his heels, and— but he did not have me off. No! I was not just convalescent from fever then, and he went quietly again. But I was on the watch, for I knew his ways. Four times he tried that buck. I am not a bold rider, I much prefer a quiet horse: but it was the best I had.

I thought I would try the rifle, and I dismounted and put in a cartridge. The gun was a Martini-Henry pattern, made in Mazar, and I felt myself rather a dare-devil sort of fellow in venturing to fire it off. I aimed at a crow and pulled the trigger: there was a violent explosion. I did not hit the crow, but the gun kicked very much and cut my lip and made my eyes water. I determined that this should not occur again, so, therefore, I held the rifle very tight, shut my eyes, drew my head away, and fired. But I did not hit the mark. I asked the Armenian if he were sure that the gun was sighted right. He said he did not know.

I said, "You had better try it."

He said he had a pain in his arm: so we rode on a little further.

By-and-bye, the Syce (the Burma policeman) summoned up courage and said he thought he could shoot.

I said, "Very good. There's a crow over there: you may shoot it."

He was a long time getting ready, for he felt it was a dangerous thing to do, and he turned very white. Then he fired, but he did not hit. Evidently, the gun was faulty.

Then we thought we would come home. On the way back, we saw a man on a young horse. He kept jumping him about the road, first one side then the other. The Armenian turned on him in anger and told him he was a woman.

The young man seemed indignantly surprised, and stoutly affirmed that he was *not* a woman.

The Armenian rode up to him, caught him by the coat and shouted, "You *are* a woman."

He shouted back, "I am *not* a woman."

They looked very fierce, and I thought they were coming to blows. But the young man snatched his coat away and went off at a gallop. The Armenian followed him a little way, then came back looking satisfied.

My horse went back very quietly, but I felt sure his feelings were hurt at not being able to run away when he wanted to. He did not often want to run : he much preferred walking, as a rule.

That evening, the Armenian went out to dinner to the Page boy's, next door, and a creature came in the evening to sing in the servants' room. How I loathed him ! He had a frightful voice. I told them to shut all the windows, but it was no use ; I could hear him. He delighted in prolonging an upper note on the vowel e-e-e-e. Imagine it ! He indulged copiously in the trill, which he produced by shaking his head. Then he took a run down the scale, slurring one note into the other. When I first came to Mazar,

he wanted to sing to me frequently; but I thanked him and said that, not being fond of music, I would pay him a trifling sum *not* to sing to me. Then he wanted to play to me on the "Rhubarb." Why the instrument—it is a sort of mandolin—should have the same name as that particularly nasty vegetable, I don't know. It has a harsh and penetrating sound and I begged to be excused.

Among the natives, however, the "Rubâb" is a very popular instrument: it is played with the plectrum, a piece of ivory held between the fingers and thumb. There is another instrument resembling the Rubâb, which is played with a bow. A third, the "Seithar," resembles a banjo with a four-foot arm; it has three strings and is played with the fingers. The "Tom-toms" or drums are the same as in India.

Every military camp is provided with a bronze gong on which the hours are struck day and night, the time being taken from the noonday gun, which is regulated by the Amîr's repeater. In Turkestan I was for a long time charmed by the sound of the gongs: it resembled so exactly the distant church bells of England.

As a residential spot Mazar had its drawbacks. The utter absence of the picturesque; the bare monotonous plain with scorching poisonous summer and icy winter; the hopeless colony of those unhappy outcasts, the lepers; these surroundings, in spite of the novelty of the situation, had of necessity a depressing effect on the health. There were, however, certain counteracting elements, for besides the homelikeness of the distant bells, there was the goodwill shown by the townsfolk. These were mild and

inoffensive people, who exhibited considerable kindliness and courtesy. Riding home one day from the Hospital I perceived a small boy "who put his thumb unto his nose and spread his fingers out." In astonishment I pulled up to look at him. He at once added his other hand, thumb to finger.

"Behold this youth!" I said to the Armenian severely, "he reviles the stranger that is within his father's gates."

"No, Sir," said the Armenian, "he give it you very great salaam."

"My son, it behoves not the King's Interpreter to deceive with specious words."

"Sir, truly I speak: this is Mazari salaam."

I perceived then that the boy's thumb was at the root of the nose between the eyebrows, and that the hands were horizontal. As we rode on I noted with considerable interest other salutations in the market-place. The Mazari peasants salaamed as did the boy. By others we were greeted by the dignified bow and the "salaam aleicoum" of the Afghan. We returned the bow, allowing a polite smile to irradiate our countenance and answered "W'aleicoum salaam."

Ere reaching our own house we perceived Prince Amin Ullah, aged three, accompanied by his tutor. Stopping his palanquin the Prince responded to our bow by touching, in the military fashion, his astrakhan hat. After politely enquiring each other's health—we made no reference to the state of the weather, as is the custom of Occidental cities—we courteously took leave of one another, saluting in the same manner as when we met. The young Prince has the

privilege of possessing considerable personal beauty, and, added to that, he is very precocious—added to that he shows—he exhibits a discernment and wisdom far beyond his years. Many are the wise sayings attributed to this royal child (I have forgotten what they were, but they told me he was very clever), so that he is indeed a true son of his august papa—sire I should say.

Then we rode in at the porch of our house, and dismounting from our wearied but sprightly steed, we ascended the steps and sought the privacy of our own apartments. I think that winds it up all right.

CHAPTER XVII

THE AMÎR AS AN ART CRITIC

The "villain" cook. Mental effect of a cold in the head. Portrait of the infant Prince: a way out of the difficulty. The Amîr's reflection in the window. The Page boy and the Portrait. The Amîr as an Art Critic. The tea tray. Salaams to the King's Portrait. The Amîr's toilet. The start on a shooting expedition. Page boys as riders. The mud of Mazar. A makeshift candlestick: the Armenian's comments. The sample case of cigars. The Amîr's handwriting. A sunset.

The next day I had an awful cold in my head, so that after I had seen my patients and had visited the Prince I stayed in. I made a sketch of the Armenian, in which he looked precisely like a Salvation Army captain. I don't know why, for he certainly had not that look himself. Then the Armenian went for a ride. He asked if I wished to go, but I said no. I did not feel up to encountering the eccentricities of my steed.

I had taken back into service the cook whom I had discharged for swindling, and presently he came in. He brought lunch, and I thought I might as well eat it as not: it was something to do. I hoped he would not speak to me, for I knew if he did I should pour all the fragments of languages I had learnt on his head, and then he would say, "Bôt achcha, Sahib"—"very

good, sir." Then I should have sprung up and withered him with a look.

He was wise, and did not speak ; but he irritated me with his nervous servility. One would think that I was violent—I am not. I never kicked him, nor threatened to shoot him, or anything. Moreover, I even went so far as to tell the Armenian to explain to him, for he could not speak English, that I should *not* tear him into small pieces and grind his bones to powder, unless he tried to cheat me again. He pretended to smile, but I do not think he believed me.

The roast fowl was tough : but, no, I did not tell him. What was the good ? There is no satisfaction in saying : " In murgh bisyar sakht ast." But if I had flung down my knife and fork with much noise on to my plate, turned round on him suddenly—how he would have jumped—and said, " Behold ! Oh thing, born in iniquity ; this fowl is as tough as leather." There would have been something satisfying in that ; but I did not. He would not have understood, and would have said, " Bôt achcha, Sahib." So I breathed a sigh through my clenched teeth, and ate a macaroon.

I thought I would have a cigarette after tiffin, and I reached to the fireplace for a piece of charcoal : of course, I picked it up by the hot end, that is just what anyone would do when he had a cold.

Then the Armenian came back from his ride, and, because it was an impossibility for me to get any more revolver cartridges, he had been firing off my revolver. But that was not all ; he must needs add insult to injury.

" This revolver is not good," he said.

I asked, with deadly calm, "Perhaps you would be kind enough to explain *why* this revolver is not good?"

"It does not make noise enough," he said.

"If you expect a revolver to make as much noise as a home-made rifle that nearly kicks its owner off into space, all I can say is, your expectation exceeds your intellect."

But I don't think he followed me in this line of delicate sarcasm, because he merely said, "I shot at a crow."

"*Did* you?" I said; "I hope you apologised."

Then that cook brought some wood for the fire; but he crept cautiously to look through the doorway and see if I was quiet before he ventured in. I saw him, the villain. I am not a wild beast. Am I a wild beast?

He came in again, and he tried English this time. "Sahib, I want tea?" he said, in a trembling voice. The maniac wished to inquire whether *I* wanted tea. I thought, "Shall I?—shall I chill his marrow, and make his flesh creep?" but I didn't. I merely said "Yes."

My cold disappeared after a day or two, and I made several sketches of the infant Prince in my note-book. When the little tunic and busby were finished, I borrowed them, and brought them home with me. I buttoned up the coat and stuffed it with cotton wool, arranging the sleeves with care, and placed the little fur busby in a suitable position. Then I set to work to paint them. When I had finished, I painted in the little man's face from my sketch-book. It was an odd-looking little painting—a man's costume and a baby's face.

I took it to the Durbar and showed it to His Highness. He seemed pleased with it, and declared the eyes were exactly like his own. I said they were :—in fact, I intended they should be when I was painting them. I did another portrait of the little Prince some years afterwards that was much more interesting ; I must speak of that later.

His Highness, the Amîr, could not, of course, spare time to give me a sitting every day, so that often a considerable interval elapsed between the sittings. However, the portrait gradually progressed towards completion.

As a painting, technically speaking, it might have been better : but as a likeness it was not at all bad.

One day, after a sitting, when luncheon was brought, I happened to notice His Highness moving his head from side to side. I wondered what he was doing ; then he turned to me with a smile, and said he saw his reflection in the glass of the window, but was surprised to find that it did not move as he moved. He could not understand it for a moment. Then he saw the explanation. The portrait was standing on its easel in the room, and it was the reflection of his effigy, not of himself, that he saw. I thought this was a very good sign ; it seemed to show that, at any rate, I had caught the attitude and general look of the Amîr.

After lunch His Highness withdrew, and I put the easel and picture at one end of the room and sat down at the far end with a cigar, to take a comprehensive look at the thing. It happened to be standing in exactly the place where the Amîr usually sits. Presently there came running in a little Page boy

with a message from the Harem serai. He turned to the picture at once, and said, "Sahib, Salaam aleicoum." Then he saw what he had done, for everyone laughed. He seemed very much taken aback and ran out of the room.

His Highness often gave me the benefit of his criticisms, and although he did not profess to be a painter, his remarks were so redolent of common sense that they were well worth listening to. A painter staring at his picture, day after day as it grows under his hand, may completely overlook faults that are obvious even to an untrained eye. Hence, I always listened to the Amîr's remarks with interest. He could tell me when a thing struck him as in some way not true, though he could not tell me exactly what was wrong, nor in what way to remedy the defect. These I puzzled out for myself. As an example: he said one day that the paint had become rubbed, showing the canvas through, and he pointed to the spot—on the end of the nose. It was not the paint rubbed off, but I had put a touch of high light on the spot indicated, and the Amîr's remark showed me that my "high light" was too white and too strong, or it would never have caught his eye. I altered it.

Another day, looking at the picture, he said it needed something, he hardly knew what. Suddenly he sent a Page off to another room and the boy returned with a Russian tea-tray which had a picture on it—a gorgeous sunset behind some mountains.

"Bibin," said the Amîr, "see! something like that is needed."

I was nonplussed for a moment: the tea-tray was

too awful for words. Then I saw what His Highness meant.

"Sahib! shuma rast megoyèd," I said in admiration. "Sir! you speak truly. I will remedy the fault."

In a few minutes I had put in a shadow behind the head, which threw it up wonderfully. I had not noticed, till the Amîr pointed it out, that the head had rather the look of being cut out and stuck on the canvas. His Highness saw there was a want of harmony somewhere, and his tea-tray showed me where.

It will be understood, therefore, that when the last sitting was given and the last touch made, I felt a certain amount of—nervous excitement, while I was waiting for His Highness's dictum.

The portrait was placed in a good light. His Highness called for a large mirror, which was placed by the side of it, and he sat for some time comparing his reflection in the glass with the picture.

Presently he said that the only fault he could find was that I had, perhaps, given a little too much colour to the cheeks. He said he had that colour when he was younger, but that now he was forty-six (this was in 1890), and his face struck him as being somewhat paler. This did not take long to remedy, and it was shown him again.

"Darust! darust!" said he—"Right," and the only fault now was that the picture did not speak! He told me that Her Majesty, our Queen, had sent him a photograph of herself, but that, in his opinion, it was not good: that such a likeness as

the one I had painted had never before been seen in Afghanistan. This I thought to be quite likely, and yet not be very great praise. Altogether, he was, without doubt, pleased with the portrait. As regards my own opinion : the technique or handling was very amateurish, not that it mattered very much, for no one knew any more about "technique" than I did. It was like the Amîr certainly ; but I often wondered afterwards how I could have painted a strong head so weakly. The only explanation I had was that the diffused light—reflections from white walls and snow—were factors that I ought to have considered more, and in some way or other guarded against.

When the portrait was brought to my house to be varnished, there happened to be a crowd of patients outside, and several people, soldiers and townsfolk, waiting inside for treatment. The picture was escorted by a guard of soldiers : the crowds outside murmured "Salaam aleicoum !" as a lane was made for the procession to enter ; those inside sprang to their feet and salaamed also.

A message came, ostensibly from the Sultana, that the portrait was to be conveyed to the Harem for her to see.

The Armenian, with a boldness that surprised me, refused to allow it to leave the house unless a written order from "Amîr Sahib" could be produced—none arrived. Possibly, this may have been a test on the part of the Amîr to see what I should do : for he guards his personal dignity with jealous care.

When the last sitting was over we had lunch at the Palace, and I was informed that, afterwards, His Highness intended to go out shooting. Accordingly, when lunch (or breakfast) was over the Amîr's shooting costume was brought by the Chamberlain and Pages. The Amîr's toilet is generally a more or less public function, and I was not required to withdraw. The coat was of olive-green cloth, lined and trimmed with astrakhan, and ornamented like a Hussar's coat with gold embroidery and shoulder knots. The boots were in the pattern of Russian boots, long ones of soft leather that can be wrinkled down : they were made in Kabul.

His Highness's horse was waiting outside, a steady strong-looking nag, with a padded saddle and a gold-bedecked bridle. Two other led horses were in readiness, each with cloth of gold thrown over the saddle. There was a small guard of foot-soldiers and several mounted men. One carried the Amîr's rifle ; another a lance and shield—why, I do not know ; another, the chillim or hubble-bubble, the vase of which was in a leather case slung to the saddle. This was for the use of the suite, as the Amîr rarely, if ever, smokes the chillim, and only occasionally a cigarette. There were several Page boys mounted : they were good riders, keeping their seat chiefly by balance. Like most boys, they were rather reckless, and were ready enough to exhibit their skill for the benefit of onlookers.

His Highness came from the Palace. The guard saluted, a stool was placed and His Highness mounted; the bystanders murmuring " Kaìri Allah !" just as he reached the saddle.

It was a pretty sight seeing them all start, for the day was bright and sunny: it had been pouring with rain all the day before.

The Armenian and I went for a ride also, but we did not see His Highness. The mud! In some of the narrow lanes, where the sun shone for only a few minutes in the day, it was like floundering through a bog, and you came every now and again to a seemingly bottomless hole—you did not know there was one till you were in it. Out on the plains it was all right; the sun had dried the surface hard.

We took "the rifle" with us, but did not get a shot at anything. I proposed shooting at a horse that was grazing, just outside the city, on the scrubby grass that the rain had brought up, but the Armenian seemed to think there was just an off chance that I might hit it, and if so I should have to disemburse lucre for same.

In the evening I was sitting comfortably on the ground in front of the fire, leaning against an inverted chair. I found I was safer so: my chairs were portable ones, and sometimes shut up when it was neither necessary nor desirable. The one reliable one had never recovered after Hakim Abdur Rashid sat on it. On a box at my elbow I had two nice tallow candles, one in a brass candlestick and one in a bottle, and I was peacefully smoking and trying to learn Persian. Quite suddenly the Armenian pounced on one of my candles, the one in the bottle, and hurried it out of sight.

"Hullo!" I said, "what's up?"

"Sir, nothing up, but somebody coming."

"You need not take my light if they are."

"Oh, sir!" he said reproachfully, "you King's doctor, and people see you have candle in bottle! Shame come for you!"

"Where does the shame come in?" I asked.

"Sir, you not know: men of Afghanistan very fool men, a little they talk if they see."

The arrival turned out to be a messenger from the Palace with a letter and a parcel from His Highness. The parcel was a sample case of cigars, and the letter, in the Amîr's handwriting, directed me to smoke and choose: I was to let His Highness know which were the best, and he would order a supply of them.

The Amîr's writing is peculiar. He uses a steel pen, not the native reed pen: like many other illustrious men, he cannot be considered a good penman.

The next day was dull and rainy, but we had a glorious sunset. The sky, in its depth, was a perfect blue, which grew fainter and faded to primrose as it neared the mountains half hid in the piled up clouds. The summits, huge and rugged, had torn through the layers of cloud and shone red in the sun: their bold and rigid outlines, casting deep purple shadows, were cut off from the calm of the sky by the heavy clouds piled up behind them. These great masses, though seemingly almost as solid as rock, had softer outlines than the rugged peaks, and they showed great billowy waves of red light and deep shadow. Below the peaks the clouds hung in drawn-out layers, the lights and shadows becoming lost in grey and brown: lower, all was lost in a depth

of deep purple blue, which mingled with the rich green brown of the darkened and foreshortened treeless plain. Sharp against all this depth of purple and green were the leafless branches and myriad branchlets of the trees of Mazar, red gold in the sun.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LEVEE ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

The Mahomedan New Year's Eve. Presents. The "Izzat" medal. Coinage of Afghanistan: Rupees: Pice: the "Tilla." Levee on New Year's Day. The guests: Maleks and Governors: The British Agent. Presents to the Amîr. The Levee as a picture. Lunch. Chess as played in Afghanistan. The great rider among men: his fall. The Amîr as a Pathologist. The steam-engine pony: his paces: his wickedness. Sight-seeing with the Princes. The Temple of Mazar. The booths at the entrance to the Temple. The Park of Mazar. Native music. The Afghan dance. The wrestling contests: Turkoman *v.* Mazari. Kabuli wrestling.

MARCH 21st is the Mahomedan New Year's Day. On New Year's Eve one of the Chief Secretaries was announced. He entered, accompanied by some servants carrying two trays with cloths over them. After the usual salutations the Secretary gave me a letter. It was from His Highness requesting my acceptance of the accompanying presents.

The cloths were lifted and I found that His Highness had conferred upon me the gold Afghan Medal of Honour and had presented me with five thousand rupees.

The medal was for the work I had done among the sick during the past year, and the rupees for the portrait.

From the Sultana was a gold English lever hunting watch and chain, and six or seven yards of stuff,

the prevailing tint of which was Indian red, but which was so woven with gold threads that it seemed red gold. I heard that the medal was unique: it was the only one of the kind that had been struck.

I do not think I have said anything about the coinage of Afghanistan. The ordinary medium of exchange is the rupee. It is a smaller coin than the kaldar, or Indian rupee, being about the size of a shilling. Nominally, it is worth twelve annas, though there is no such coin as an anna in circulation. A half rupee is called a kran. The copper coins in circulation are called pice. Five pice go to the anna. There are sixty or more pice in a rupee, according to the exchange, which can always be found out by reference to the money-changers in the bazaars. Formerly the coins were struck by hand. Quite recently His Highness has established a minting machine in Kabul. I think the new rupee is scarcely as artistic as the old; it is Europeanised, and it is said to be worth an anna less. Pice, too, are now being made in the minting machine. The Amîr is introducing the new rupee into circulation by paying the soldiers of his army with that coin.

There is no gold Afghan coin in circulation, though the Bokhara "Tilla," worth about twelve shillings, is current. Many of the richer Afghans hoard their wealth, and for this purpose they buy Bokhara Tillas, or bar gold, from the alluvial deposits of the Oxus.

On New Year's Day, "Nau Rôz," the Amîr held a Levee in the Palace Gardens. I went about ten o'clock.

His Highness wore a white uniform, and over his

shoulders was thrown a dark green cloak, slightly embroidered with gold. He wore the otter skin busby and diamond star that I painted in the portrait. He looked very handsome.

Every one was as gorgeous as he could make himself; some looked uncommonly well; a few ridiculous.

There was a great awning of crimson and white, supported on eleven masts. Under it were seated, in rows—or rather kneeling, for they were in the presence of the King—the Maliks and Governors of neighbouring villages and towns, who had come to salaam His Highness. These were almost all dressed in native costumes, with turbans.

The Guard, who had new uniforms, were in line, and the people of the Court were grouped about near His Highness, who was seated in an arm-chair.

I had a chair to the right of His Highness the Amîr, and somewhat behind him. The rest stood or sat on the ground. The Armenian stood behind my chair. The day was cold and the sky grey. I was dressed in European costume with an overcoat, on the left breast of which the Armenian had with great pride fixed the medal. He wanted me to wear the watch and chain outside as well. As there was no sun I wore an astrakhan hat of the Royal shape which had been presented to me. Bands with European and native instruments played alternately. Tea was brought to everyone by the servants, and I had a cigar. Then came cakes and sweets. A special tray was brought to His Highness, and he was kind enough to send me some from it, otherwise after my first bow and his enquiry after my health, I did not occupy much of his attention.

Col. Attaullah Khan, the British Agent, who is a very tall fine man, a Punjabi, came escorted by his guard, and attended by his native Doctor and his Secretary, the highly educated Munshi Amin Ullah.

He made his salaam, and was invited to sit on the Amîr's left, on the ground. The Secretary and Doctor were seated away under the awning.

Then presents were brought and laid at His Highness's feet. He seemed just to glance at them, and they were taken away. There were all kinds of things, the cost depending upon the wealth of the giver: silk handerchiefs, brass work, lamps, vases, fruit, crockery; but what interested me most were the products of the Government workshops in Mazar —rifles, swords, saddles, boots, sun helmets, and two tables of carved wood uncommonly well made, and looking as though they came from Europe.

As a picture, the whole scene was brilliant with colour; and the grey sky, with the delicate pink and white of the blossoms covering the trees and the faint green of the just budding leaves, made a very sweet and harmonious background.

Presently the Amîr's portrait was brought out and exhibited. Afterwards breakfast (or lunch) was brought. His Highness's table was placed in front of him, and a little one was brought for me. The rest had theirs on the ground, as usual. The chief cook waited upon me. After breakfast a copper ewer and basin (aftabah and chillimchi) were taken to the chief guests, and they washed their hands.

For the others long narrow damp towels, each reaching from end to end of a row of guests, were

passed along, so that a dozen or more could wipe their hands at the same moment.

After another cigar I rose, made my bow, and retired, much to the Armenian's disgust. I think I was the first to go. Many people asked to look at my medal, and the Commander-in-Chief, who was some little distance from me, gave a congratulatory smile and bow as he touched his breast.

I got home about half-past two ; some sick people were brought, and after a cup of tea I set to work again.

In the evening I played chess. I had been playing with different people, and had always been beaten. I determined, therefore, to play the Armenian. He knew the moves, and we sat down to a game. We played rapidly, and he grew very excited. He muttered in Pushtu, or shouted in a mixture of Hindustani, Persian, and English. He swooped with his Wazir or Queen, and cried "Kisht ! check !" I took his Queen with a Pawn, at which he was indignant : he said it was not fair, and he wanted his Queen back. I began to doubt if he would ever make, so to speak, a good player ; he was too impulsive : he swooped and slaughtered right and left. We had one game where in the end we had nothing left but a King and a Pawn each : then he took my Pawn. I told him the game was drawn, because I saw he would get across and have a Castle before I could stop him ; but he said—No, he had won. I appealed to the onlookers, and they said politely, "Undoubtedly the game is drawn." However, I consented to a compromise, and allowed it to be drawn in his favour.

Chess as played in Afghanistan is slightly different from chess as played in England.

In the first move, the Pawn goes only one square. The Queen is called the "Wazir," or Prime Minister, and stands on the King's *right*. The Bishop is called the "Fil," or Elephant. The Knight is called "Asp," or Horse, or sometimes the "Sowar," that is "Rider," or Knight. The Castle is called the "Rookh," and is supposed to be a Redoubt or Fort. Sometimes it is called the "Tôp," or Cannon. There is some slight difference in the castling, though I forget exactly what, otherwise the pieces have the same moves as in England.

My "fool-horse"—the fighter, with tooth and nail (that is to say, hoof)—developed "cracked heels." This was unfortunate, for I knew nothing about horse doctoring, and he got into the habit of stumbling and coming down on his nose. Twice did I remain on under these circumstances, and proudly I said to the Armenian,

"Behold, now! I am as a great rider among men."

"Yes, sir?" said the Armenian, "I think it you fall off."

But, alas! Pride cometh, then cometh the fall. The next time he came down I went over his head. There was a sentence I had to learn in my Persian lesson that day that seemed appropriate, it was:—"Ba zamin ûftad, Ustoghonash rèz rèz shud," which means, "He fell to the earth and his bones were broken to pieces." Not that mine were, but they might have been. I seemed, as it were, to have lost confidence in my horse, and I said to the Armenian, "This must not occur again; see to it."

"Sir! what *I* do?" he asked.

"Sell him, or shoot him."

But he said No; he would report the matter to Amîr Sahib at the next Durbar.

Tuesday arrived, and we went to the Durbar. After I had saluted His Highness, and was seated, a case of epilepsy was brought. His Highness described to me the symptoms the man was exhibiting, told me the Persian name of the disease, and gave his own views as to the pathology. He told me the old books said, that a man in this condition was possessed by the Devil, "Shaitân"; but, that this was, of course, absurd. He went on to say that he considered the disease was due to an organism—probably, animal—having found its way into the ventricles of the brain: the irritation caused by its presence culminating in a nervous explosion; the outward signs of which were a convulsive seizure, a thrusting forward of the tongue, spasm of the jaws, a foaming at the mouth, and insensibility. He said, he wished to administer a native medicine, but, at the same time, I was to give such European drugs as I thought suitable for the case.

I asked, then, if some wooden stethoscopes might be made for the Hindustani assistants, as neither of them possessed one. I had been giving them some instructions, and had been holding classes in the evening for the compounders. I found there was not a great deal I could teach the Priest compounder "Hafiz." He was very well up in his work, and was an intelligent man, the only one I could really rely on in an operation.

Then the Armenian considered that the time had

come to speak about the horse, and he waxed eloquent.

His Highness said, "Why ride a horse so dangerous; I have many horses."

He told me he had a black horse, a remarkable animal, whose speed was like that of a steam-engine. This he would send for. It had been coveted by many of the Courtiers: one wanted it for his son, another for himself; but His Highness would not give it to anyone. I had never seen it. The horse was sent for. I pictured a lovely creature, like an Arab, with a small head, slender limbs, and broad chest. Judge of my surprise when I beheld a black shaggy pony, all mane and tail. I thought within myself: "They are playing it low down upon the stranger within their gates."

But, at a sign from the Amîr, the head-groom mounted and off the pony started. He did not gallop, canter, trot, nor walk: he simply "skated" over the ground at terrific speed. They said he could keep the pace up for thirty miles without stopping, and could travel from Mazar to Kabul in four days!

Hence, if one found it necessary to move from one place to another hurriedly, this horse seemed likely to be invaluable.

His Highness said that as this horse was not beautiful I was to choose two other horses, handsome and swift. The pony I was to keep at my house, and the other two should be kept in his own stable, and when I needed them I was to send for them.

That black pony was uncanny. An evil spirit—

several evil spirits—possessed him. The first thing he did, when we got him home, was to deliberately untie his halter, walk off to the "fool horse," though he was only about half his size, and fight him. He went so quietly and seemed so gentle—just at first: but he was a fiend. They fought furiously, striking, kicking, and tearing at each other with their teeth. If we had not succeeded in separating them the "fool horse" would have been killed.

Shortly after that, and without any hurry, he slipped his head out of his headstall and walked off to a horse belonging to the Armenian, a young one he had lately bought to trade with in Kabul. The young one was frightened, and the "Steam-engine," seeing it was an adversary not worthy of his steel—or teeth—merely nipped him in the neck and walked back again.

The next day I rode him to the Hospital. The Armenian was riding a grey—a cross between an Arab and a Kataghani, a swift animal—and one of the compounders was on the "fool horse," who stumbled. When we got through the bazaars I gave the pony his head, and off he skated. I leant back and occupied myself in hanging on. He kept the grey at a gallop all the way to the Hospital: about a quarter of an hour afterwards the compounder arrived on the "fool horse." I saw my patients, cut off a man's thumb at the wrist, then we skated back again.

One afternoon, it was in April, as I was coming back from seeing a patient, I met the two little Princes, Hafiz Ullah and Amin Ullah, who were aged respectively about nine and three. They were in their palanquins, and there was a guard of about

thirty soldiers. As the sun was hot, a large umbrella was held over each Prince.

I pulled up my horse and saluted, and the elder of the two Princes asked if I would not accompany them. The Armenian and I, therefore, turned our horses and rode with them. I wondered where we were going.

We marched through the streets and bazaars, the guard flourishing their almond sticks to clear people out of the way, till we reached the gates leading into the grounds around the Temple or Mosque of Mazar.

Here the Armenian and I dismounted, and I walked by the side of the elder Prince's palanquin : the Armenian came behind. The Prince's Kaffir Page boys were there, his tutor, and other young men, officers of his household. I had never been so near the Mosque before. They say it is about two hundred years old. It is truly Oriental in style, with cupola, pierced stone (lattice work) windows, and minarets. The blue-stone—or porcelain—bricks of which it is built are of different tints, the contrasting tints being arranged in patterns. In the immediate grounds, or square, of the Temple, were a number of shops or booths, where they sold handkerchiefs, porcelain articles, and strings of beads, or rosaries. In the front of each shop was an awning of rush matting, supported on two poles. The sun shone brilliantly, and in the distance the mountains glimmered shadowy blue in the heated air. The crowds of people, and the shopkeepers, salaamed as the Princes went by. We marched through and on into the Park of Mazar—the Chahar Bagh. The park is about a mile in width each way. We went along the paths under the trees till we

reached a large open space, where I found there was to be a wrestling contest. At one end of the space was a mound or platform, about six feet above the level. On it were spread carpets ; and supported on poles was a brilliantly-coloured awning to keep off the glare of the sun.

There were two chairs for the Princes and a chair was given to me. The guard was arranged round, the Page boys stood in a line behind us, and the others, including the Armenian and the tutor, were seated on the ground.

The tutor was a smart young fellow, very polished in manner, who used to cheat at cards in the most amusing and barefaced way. I had met him before. Around the open space were crowds of spectators, all in national costume : most of them with white turbans, long loose coats of various colours, and white baggy pyjamas, tight at the ankle. The front ranks were seated, cross-legged, on the ground ; behind them were rows standing. The ground sloped upwards for about three feet, so that all could see. Forming a background were the trees, all covered with green, for the summer comes rapidly in Turkestan ; the roses were blooming in April.

First, the band played. The musicians stood in the centre, their musical instruments being drums and pipes, or flageolets. The latter were large, black instruments, bound with brass, and with a tone not unlike that of the bagpipes.

They played an Afghan tune, most quaint to my ear, and the drums beat rhythmically, but with a rhythm quite different from anything I had heard in Europe.

Then there came forward about thirty Afghan

soldiers, belonging to an artillery regiment. They were to dance an Afghan dance. Their dress was the usual costume of the Pathan soldier—the conical cap and small turban, white vest hanging loose over the white pyjamas, and a short jacket. The Princes, by the way, both wore military uniforms and belts, with gem-bedecked buckles, and astrakhan hats of the Royal shape. The tutor wore a plain grey tunic and an astrakhan hat of a different shape. I sported a turban, for I was afraid of the sun, and the turban is an excellent protection to the head. The Kaffir Pages had grey tunics and trousers and soft grey felt hats. The Princes and their suite therefore were European in dress.

The thirty soldiers formed a ring round the musicians ; the drums beat a sort of slow march, and the dancers walked slowly round singing a chant in falsetto—one-half sang a verse, the other half answered. Presently the pipes began their shrill wailing, and the dancers moved faster, with a step something like a mazurka. Quicker and quicker grew the music, and quicker and quicker the dance : turbans and shoes were tossed off without a pause. The circle widened and lessened at regular intervals, and arms were waved and hands clapped simultaneously. The dancers became excited, uttering at intervals a sharp cry. Still continuing the mazurka step, every dancer at each momentary pause in the music whirled round on his toes to the right, then to the left. Some were, of course, more graceful than others. One in particular, I noticed—a huge man with a short black beard, and long wavy black hair parted on one side ; he was a most enthusiastic and

graceful dancer. It was a curiously stirring sight. One could imagine fiery Afghans worked up to a pitch of excitement almost approaching frenzy. In time the dancers became exhausted, and dropped off one by one.

Then came a dance by about a dozen boys, aged about thirteen or fourteen; they wore their hair long, and were dressed as girls. I was not interested. Their dancing was not to be compared with, though it somewhat resembled, that of the European ballet.

When the dances were over, tea was brought to us under the awning, and then the wrestling commenced. This was excellent.

First came Turkoman soldiers matched against Mazarîs. They were barefooted, and wore the small skull cap of the Turkoman, short cotton breeches, and long loose coat unfastened.

A pair advanced and took their stand a few paces apart, near the Prince's platform. They watched each other a moment, then warily sidled round. Suddenly one rushed forward and they closed, each seizing the other by the collar and elbow. Rarely could a wrestler manage to get both his arms under those of his opponent : when he did, the bout was over in a moment. By collar and elbow each tried to twist the other off his feet or trip him. It was necessary to throw the opponent, so that he should be flat on his back on the ground. Often there was a long writhing struggle when they both were down, till one could disengage. Some of the bouts grew very exciting, but the Turkomans invariably came off winners, they were so immensely strong, with such Herculean muscles. The Mazarîs showed plenty of pluck and

endurance, but they were no match for the Turkomans. Finally, seeing that the Mazarîs were outmatched, the elder Prince pitted the Turkomans one against the other. The men were not very keen upon wrestling their comrades.

There happened to be two Turkomans of enormous size; the biggest men I ever saw. It would have been folly for anyone there to stand up to either of them, and the Prince, after some persuasion, induced them to have a bout together.

They stood up—great giants—and walking deliberately up to one another they grappled. There was no sudden movement. It was a sheer trial of strength. At the end of the first round neither had any advantage. After that they got warmed to their work, and each grew a little jealous of the other. They commenced now in good earnest, and what had gone before was play to what came after. The knotted muscles, the clenched jaw, and the distended veins showed the enormous strain of the mighty heaves. At last, with a supreme effort, one threw the other backwards, and, like the fall of two great oaks, the giants came to the ground together.

Then came the Kabulis, who wrestled stripped except for a cincture round the waist. Theirs was a more complicated style than that of the Turkomans: they seemed in excellent training.

One Kabuli, a well-built fellow, threw man after man who came forward, though each was a practised wrestler. He had wonderful powers of endurance. The last man but one who came against him was a strong young fellow. He heaved the champion off the ground, carried him a step or two and tried

to fling him down. He might as well have tried to fling a tiger down. How it came about I could not tell, they were so locked and writhing, but in a second or two the champion was on his feet and the young man down. These men belonged to the artillery regiment that had danced.

During the wrestling, when the spectators became excited, and a popular champion was in the ring, they shouted for success or groaned for failure nearly as much as Englishmen would have done.

Then came the distribution of prizes. To the successful wrestlers the Prince gave Turkoman coats of brilliant colours—such as the Oriental loves.

While the sports were going on the Commander-in-Chief and some Officers arrived. They saluted the Princes and bowed to me ; but they would not sit on the ground while I had a chair. In the presence of the Amîr they had, at first, been greatly offended at sitting lower than I, and had made some remark on the subject after I had left : they received, however, such a severe reprimand from His Highness that they never repeated it.

When the sun began to set the air became cool, and the Princes rose and took their departure. I accompanied their Highnesses, leaving the Commander-in-Chief and the Officers in the Park.

CHAPTER XIX

THE YOUNG PRINCES

Infant Prince as the Sultana's Deputy. Reception by the Prince: the pavilion: the procession: the guard: costume: presents. Visit to Prince Hafiz Ullah: his house: conversation: presents. The wrestling again. Her Majesty's photograph. Lunch with the Prince in the Palace Gardens. The "Royal manner." The third day's wrestling. The mother of Prince Hafiz Ullah. A drawing of the Prince. Adventure with the fat General: his officiousness: the after effect on certain patients: his bullying: the after effect on himself. The power of the Amîr's name. The Amîr as a Consulting Surgeon. The Fast of Ramazàn: effect of the Fast. Overdose of tobacco: wailing. The Evening Durbar: His Highness's remarks: danger if a King fasts: "Marazàn." The Durbar as a picture. The "Pig" incident and the explanation. The surgical operation: attempted vendetta: the result: the old lady's sympathy. Flowers in the Palace. The Usbàk's artistic design: the Amîr's criticism. The Amîr's diary. The present of sugar. Official notice of return march to Kabul. The "Cracker." End of Ramazàn. Preparations for the Exodus. The guard of Amazons.

On the following day, after I had finished my work, I heard that the infant Prince, Mahomed Omer, was leaving the Harem Serai, where he had been living since his recovery from the vaccination, to take possession of a house that had been freshly prepared for him. I sent to enquire if he would receive me that afternoon. This may seem a great deal of ceremony when a baby is the principal personage, but as a matter of fact it was really paying a ceremonial visit to the Sultana. She being a Mussulman, of course did not give audience to anyone: her son received for her. At the time of which I write the baby Prince certainly took precedence of his brothers, the Princes

Hafiz Ullah and Amin Ullah, who were in Turkestan ; but whether he now takes precedence of his two eldest brothers, Habibullah and Nasrullah, I cannot say.

I was informed that the Prince would receive me. I started accompanied by the Armenian. The house was near the Harem Serai.

We were first shown into an outer garden, containing a house in which lived my small friend Mahomed Omer, son of the Deputy Commander-in-Chief in Kabul. Mahomed Omer was the infant Prince's "Commander-in-Chief." He was dressed in scarlet and gold, and marshalling the Kaffir Page boys in military order, he fancied himself quite a soldier. From this garden a screened doorway led into an inner and larger garden, the Prince's. In this were two adjoining pavilions, or summer-houses, one larger and the other smaller. They were open and airy, without doors or window sashes, and were carpeted, and hung with crimson and white. The larger pavilion had about a dozen chairs arranged against the wall : there was no other furniture. It was apparently a waiting-room, or perhaps a reception-room for visitors of lower rank. As no one had arrived I sat there with the Armenian.

Presently we heard a trumpet, and a few minutes after the hoarse voice of an officer as he shouted some word of command.

The Armenian said,

"Shahzada, Sahib, meaiyad." "The Prince is coming."

First entered the Kaffir Pages, marshalled by Mahomed Omer, then came the Prince, carried in the arms of the old Hakim Abdul Wahid—the only

Hakim in the country, so the Amir used to say, who was really learned. Then came three of the nurses: the young one I have spoken of and two older ones. These were brought from the Harem Serai in a covered palanquin: after them two or three officials in uniform, whose faces I recognised, though in what capacity they served I did not know; and lastly, the guard of a hundred soldiers.

I came outside the larger pavilion to receive the Prince, and followed him into the smaller one. In this was a couch covered with silk and supported on silvered legs, modelled in the shape of conventional or heraldic birds. There was a child's high chair of carved oak with a tapestry seat in the room, and a small table with ornaments on it in the corner.

The Prince was placed in a chair, and he sat upright like a little man nine months old. He wore a tunic of gold-embroidered silk, white pyjamas and astrakhan hat, of the royal shape. In his hand he had a gold rattle.

A chair was placed for me, and the others stood or sat on the ground. After the usual courteous enquiries and some conversation, in which, of course, Hakim Abdul Wahid was the Prince's deputy, a large tray of sweetmeats with loaves of sugar was placed at my feet. I do not quite know the significance of this custom: I know it is symbolical, and I think to symbolize the wish of the host that his guest's future existence, in this world and the next, may be filled with sweet emotions. By and by, little Prince Amin Ullah arrived, accompanied by his tutor, but with very little State, compared with that of his brother.

After the inevitable tea, I took leave of their Highnesses and departed. On the way home, I saw the tutor of Prince Hafiz Ullah at the window of his Prince's house. He smiled and beckoned me to come in. There was a sentry at the door, and the Armenian and I went in. The house was not so good as that of the Baby Prince, nor was it as good as mine.

Prince Hafiz Ullah was seated on the ground on a leopard skin, and as there were no chairs I also sat on the ground on a sort of mattress. The Armenian went off to my house, which was quite near, for some cigarettes, and I stayed with the Prince for about an hour and a half, till the heat of the afternoon was less. His Highness courteously said that I was not a servant in Afghanistan, but his friend and his brother. He asked if I would go again with him to the park to see the wrestling, as the sports were not over.

As this was my first visit to little Hafiz Ullah Khan, he asked me to accept a present: a leather pocket-book, a pocket-knife, and a walking-stick, the best he had.

I have often been somewhat surprised at the inability of most Afghans to distinguish a genuine article from an imitation. Merchants make a harvest in the country by taking advantage of this want of knowledge.

At half-past four we started for the park. The wrestling and dancing were a repetition of the exhibition of the day before. The Turkomans still carried all before them. They were not all such hugely tall men, though they were all excessively muscular.

There were no Kabuli wrestlers this day, but, as I happened to say I thought the Kabulis were specially good wrestlers, the Prince gave orders for a display of Kabuli wrestling for the morrow.

We got home at half-past seven in the evening, and I sent some photographs to the Prince—I had nothing else to give him—one of our Queen, one of the Prince of Wales, and two or three more that I had. He was pleased, as he is fond of pictures, and he was particularly interested in the portraits of the Queen and Prince of Wales.

The next day was Friday, the Sabbath, and the Prince sent me an invitation to lunch with him in the Palace Gardens. His Highness, the Amîr, was away out on the plains shooting, and there was no garden attached to the Prince's house. Two soldiers came to escort me—not with fixed bayonets, for I was not a prisoner, at any rate, not nominally, though perhaps actually; for the position was, with all its interest, not very far removed from honourable confinement.

The sun shone brilliantly, and we sat under the almond trees. The Prince in native costume, sat on a sort of divan with carpet and cushions. I had a chair and table. The tutor and others were there, and the guards were posted around under the trees. I smoked cigarettes and talked. It was very pleasant, surrounded as we were by flowers and grass, and there were so many trees that we seemed almost in the heart of a wood. I actually saw the Prince laugh!—for the first time. He was a dignified and polished little man, and has, the Amîr says—with one other son—the "Royal manner."

At one o'clock lunch was brought.

Afterwards the Prince asked if I would accompany him to the Chahar Bagh, to see the sports again. I said I should enjoy doing so, and he went away with his tutor to be attired in "purple and fine linen," or, in other words, in European military dress. They were some time gone, and I wandered about under the trees by myself.

When the Prince returned we started. Being the Sabbath, there were a greater number of spectators than on the previous occasions. So much time was taken up in finding suitable Mazarîs to oppose the muscular Turkomans, that there was no opportunity for the Kabuli wrestlers to come into the ring. Otherwise the dancing and wrestling were a repetition of the former days.

When we got home the Prince sent me some oranges, and a Russian knife, fork, and spoon in a case, and a Turkestan cap embroidered with gold, worked by his mother. This lady, a wife of His Highness's, is from Kaffristan. She is said to be one of the most beautiful women in the country, and is called, on account of her perfect pink and white complexion, "The Pomegranate Flower."

I made a careful pencil drawing of the Prince one day. He is a fair-haired little fellow, with good features and dark eyes. It was a pretty picture, and I heard that His Highness was very pleased. The Sultana, they said, was not so well pleased: the Prince is not her son.

About this time, it was in April, I had some trouble with one of the Generals, a fat man—not that I object to fat men unless they interfere with

me—with a voice like that of a full-grown bull. This fat man attempted to bully me.

I reached the Hospital that morning at ten a.m., having seen thirty or forty patients at my own place first. General M—— A—— Khan, who was visiting the Hospital, inquired why I did not come earlier. I politely explained that I was seeing patients at my own house. He said I ought to come to the Hospital first, and attend to the others afterwards. I was surprised and somewhat annoyed, and, looking him in the face, I said—

"Chira?" "Why?" He let the matter drop.

We then went into the different wards, or rooms, where the patients were, and he said that such and such men had been in the Hospital for so long, why did I not cure them and send them out? I said—

"Because their disease does not admit of cure," and added, through the Interpreter, "Tell him he can take that, and that, and that man away, if he likes."

I had no intention of being cruel to the men; speaking in English, it did not strike me they would understand, though of course they did when it was interpreted. They seemed to give up hope at once. One shut his eyes and died the same day, another the next. I could, at first, hardly believe the report when I heard it: then I cursed that fat man.

When we had gone the round of the patients we came out into the garden. There he stood, this man, surrounded by his staff, and he commenced to take me to task. He said I was to give the patients *good* medicine and see that I cured them—one had Bright's disease, another advanced phthisis, and so on! and was continuing his tirade, when it struck me quite

suddenly—for I am a mild man—that I was being ill-treated. At once I thirsted for his blood with a dreadful thirst—the effect of the climate probably—and I desired greatly to assault him with fire-arms or with steel. Fortunately, I had neither at hand, or the situation might have become complicated. The Persian I had learnt went back on me, as it were, and I had to speak English.

"Does this son of a pig, whose ancestors were pigs for many generations; this iniquitous mass of vileness, with much body and little brain, does he——;" but this was enough for the Armenian, he guessed at the rest, and he turned on the General.

In vituperation—for volume of sound and rapidity of words—I never met the Armenian's equal. I have heard talk of the ladies of Billingsgate, and I should like to put one in the ring with the Armenian.

It grew alarming. I thought so, and so did the General. He backed and looked exceedingly uncomfortable. He tried feebly to stem the torrent: he might as well have tried to stop the Kabul river when swollen by the melting snows. Then he essayed the playful, he smiled an apologetic smile and offered me a rose: and still the Armenian foamed:—The whole matter should come before the Amîr Sahib, he was the only master in Afghanistan; if he had a complaint, let him bring it then, and so on. Many times the General tried to speak, to explain, to remonstrate, but straight ahead went the Armenian, never pausing one moment. At last the General thought he had better go, and he went.

He had not escaped yet: a letter from the Armenian followed him. In it he was solemnly

warned never to attempt that sort of thing again (he never did), that a European will not bear it, and that this particular European would proceed at once, on the slightest attempt at a repetition of the offence, to "very much kick and blow."

At the next Durbar the General happened to be standing not very far from my chair, and the Armenian said to him—

"The English doctor wishes to speak to Amîr Sahib about that little affair at the Hospital."

The General said, "For God sake don't let him. I am not his master; I am his slave, his dog, his anything!"

So the matter ended.

While the Amîr was out shooting on the plains, one of the Page boys was thrown from his horse and the inner end of his collar-bone was dislocated upwards. His Highness, on seeing the displacement, said there was no need to send for the English doctor.

"Bandages," he said, "are useless. Leave it alone." He was quite right.

On April the 22nd began the Mahomedan fast, "Ramazan." They fast for a month, neither eating, drinking, nor smoking during the day. Directly the twilight commences, however—that is when they can just no longer distinguish a white from a black thread—they commence, and go on pretty much all night.

Fortunately, the year had been very cool; cloudy, windy and rainy, so that there was much less sickness than usual in the month. Generally both during and after Ramazân there is a great prevalence

of fever and bowel complaints. The first thing an Afghan does, when he breaks his fast in the evening, is to light the chillim and fill his lungs with tobacco smoke. It is a tremendously big dose, and often produces serious consequences, such as giddiness, vomiting, and insensibility. During the fast they brought a man to me one evening on a charpoy. He was a great big fellow, and they said he was insensible from smoking. He was dead. The dose of tobacco he had taken had been too much for his heart. As soon as I said he was dead, the brother and the other soldiers who had brought him were greatly upset. They wailed and wept aloud.

The first Durbar I went to after His Highness's return from his shooting expedition on the plains was during the month of Ramazàn. The Durbar was, of necessity, held in the evening, at seven o'clock, and, the weather being fine, it was held outside the Palace, in the gardens.

For some reason or other His Highness, I could tell, was pleased with me. For instance, in addressing me, he used a familiar form of expression, such as one uses to a friend. He said it was quite a long time since he had seen me. He enquired if the Hindustani assistants were working well, and congratulated himself that the year was cool and healthy compared with the last. He said he himself did not fast during Ramazàn : that there were duties a King owed to his people, for when a man fasts he has not that control over himself and his temper that a King, with life and death in his hands, should have. He said, "Ramazàn" should be called "Marazàn"—"Maraz" meaning "disease."

Then the Armenian brought forward two or three people on whom I had had to operate for "stone," and exhibited them with much pride. His Highness was pleased, and gave presents to the patients. One, I remember, received a horse and a hundred rupees.

The Durbar was one of the most striking and picturesque sights I have seen. The background was formed by the deep shadows of the trees: under a brilliantly coloured awning, lit up by a multitude of lamps, sat some two hundred officers, in every kind of uniform, resplendent with gold embroidery; and at intervals, around the awning and Palace, stood an Afghan soldier in native costume, holding a blazing torch in one hand and an oil flask in the other, and the gleam from the torches on the billowy masses of leaf gave those soft touches of light in the background which prevent it being heavy.

We had dinner somewhat early, as the men had been fasting all day. When we got home the Armenian gave an explanation as to why the Amîr was so particularly charming. It was this:—During the shooting expedition a great deal of wild pig had been killed, and the chief Cook sent a messenger to enquire whether I would have roast pork for dinner. I was highly indignant, thinking, that as the pig is unclean, an insult was intended. I ordered the messenger to be thrashed—he was the bearer of evil tidings—and threatened direful things if such a message were repeated. The Sultana then sent for the Armenian, and enquired if I would not like a young pig or two, and whether it were not a fact that Christians ate pig.

The Armenian said that Christians were indeed

allowed by their religion to do so; but that neither Christian Priests nor Christian Doctors ever suffered anything unclean to pass their lips!!

The same evening a man was brought on a charpoy suffering great pain from a "strangulated hernia." To save his life it was necessary to operate that night. He was moved to the Hospital, where all the instruments were, and I did the operation by the light of two or three tallow candles. The next morning the brother of the patient was lying in wait for me at the Hospital with several large knives, seeking to slay me. He said I had killed his brother!

"On the contrary," I explained, "I have saved his life."

Then the Armenian came forward in all his strength.

"Harem Zada!" he shouted, "thou base-born scoundrel, thy *Father* could not speak in the Sahib's presence!" and he laid his stick across the man's shoulders with such vigour and energy that presently he broke it. He then flung the pieces at him and told him to "get"—"Birau" in Persian. He "got" accordingly.

Coming back from the Hospital we met an old lady walking. She was well dressed but wore no veil. I knew her very well to speak to, but who she was I didn't quite know. I had heard that she was nurse to the Amîr when he was a child. She seemed equally at home in the Harem and in the Durbar. The Armenian related the incident at the Hospital, and she was suitably indignant and sympathetic. Perhaps she did not treat me with that profound respect one would think was the due of a distinguished Foreigner, for she called me "Buchcha," "Youngster"!!! I overlooked

it ; for the opportunity of speaking to a lady was rare, and I enjoyed it in direct proportion to its rarity.

The next Durbar evening during Ramazàn was cold and showery. His Highness sat at the window of the Palace. I was invited inside. The scent was sweet from great clusters of roses arranged in vases. After dinner (we had two kinds of ice pudding, among other things) an Usbàk was ushered in, bringing a design he had drawn on paper for a wall decoration —flowers and leaves treated conventionally.

His Highness examined the design and said it was not bad and it was not good. This just about expressed my own opinion. The drawing was good but the colours were gaudy and clashed with one another. His Highness said he had some work of that kind done by a Kabuli which he would show me, and he sent for it.

It was an illuminated manuscript book, and the cover inside and out was painted with flowers and birds treated decoratively. It was beautiful. The drawing was excellent ; the colouring was quite harmonious, and the balance of each design was, to my eye, perfect. I said I had never seen anything of the kind better. The book itself, I was told, was His Highness's diary.

During the evening some presents were laid at His Highness's feet. Among them were two huge loaves of white sugar, about 20 lbs. each. These he directed to be given to me. Knowing something about the meaning of the custom, I was very pleased.

Before we left, His Highness said that shortly after the termination of Ramazàn we should leave Mazar for Kabul.

His Highness had promised me leave of absence for some months after his arrival in Kabul, and when I got home that night I grew enthusiastic in my description to the Armenian of the wonders and sights of London. After talking some time, I said I had seen a man seize the back of a chair with his teeth, hold it out straight, and put another on the top of it. The Armenian was not to be outdone. He said he had seen a man take a charpoy—a bedstead—balance it on one leg on the tip of his tongue, and then dance! He also described to me a curious European sweetmeat that he had met with in his travels.

"I saw him in Lahore," he said. "Like this you catch him, tear him up, and he is call 'Bang'!"

I concluded that he wished to describe the ordinary Christmas cracker.

On the evening of May 20th the fast of Ramazàn was over, and a certain number of guns were fired. The next day was a Festival. It was intensely hot, and His Highness held a Reception in the Palace Gardens. Wishing to lay a present before him, for those I ordered from London had not arrived, I painted a portrait of myself, which His Highness was pleased to accept. He sent me some apricots from his own plate by Malek, the favourite Page boy.

In the course of the morning the infant Prince, Mahomed Omer, was brought to the Reception. His Page boys, of whom there were a dozen or more, were dressed in *Scotch* dress with kilts and white solar helmets. Every one stood as the little prince was carried up to the Amîr. This caught my attention at the time, for it was not usual for all to stand when the other two little Princes entered.

When I left I went on to the gardens of the Harem Serai to pay a complimentary visit to the Sultana. Here a tray full of sweetmeats and sugar was laid at my feet, and the Armenian took care it should be conveyed to my house and promptly devoured.

A day or two after the termination of the Fast, I saw my neighbour opposite, the Mirza Abdur Rashid, superintending the packing of some of His Highness's valuables—diamonds, shawls, and furs, for transport to Kabul. Accordingly, I gave orders at the Hospital to pack up certain of the drugs and instruments; those that I needed. Some were left for the use of the Hindustani who was to remain behind and attend to the sick of the regiments which were to garrison Mazar.

The Armenian then set to work to pack all my household belongings, including the carpets; and he obtained from His Highness the necessary orders for pack-horses, both for my baggage and the Hospital stores.

On the 24th of May I heard cannon firing; on that day the troops marched out of Mazar to camp on the plains, on the first stage to Kabul. I endeavoured to ride to the Hospital to attend the sick, but every road was so crowded with loaded camels, pack-horses, and mules, that there was no way of getting there, and I had to return. The same day the Amir sent me a beautiful little bay horse to share with the "Steam-engine" pony the labour of carrying me to Kabul.

A fortnight after the troops had marched out on to the plains, the Sultana with the other ladies of the Harem left Mazar. They started soon after daybreak.

Their guard consisted not only of a body of the Amîr's soldiers, but of a regiment of mounted Amazons, some two hundred, the female slaves and servants of the Harem. These rode on men's saddles, were veiled, and wore on the head, over the veil, solar helmets, or felt hats. Each was armed with a sabre and a carbine. A syce, or groom, was told off to look after each three horses.

Two days afterwards His Highness and the Court, including myself, started on the journey. We saw little or nothing of the Harem and guard, for they kept two days' march ahead of the main body during the whole journey.

CHAPTER XX

THE RETURN JOURNEY TO KABUL

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It was June 13th when we started. The Armenian and I were up before daybreak superintending the loading up of the medical stores and my own baggage. We hoped to get well on the march before the heat of the day commenced, but the men, from want of practice, were so slow and clumsy in loading the pack-horses, that our start was delayed till nine o'clock. It was then getting very hot.

The first march was short, and soon after midday we reached the camping ground on the plains, some few miles out of Mazar. I had thought my first ride over these plains when I came to Mazar was a hot one; that was in May—this was in June!

I dismounted and stood in the sun while some of the servants commenced unloading the horses, and

others attempted to put up my tent. They were Asiatics, in their native climate: I was a Londoner, and I raised my sun helmet every minute or two, hoping to catch a little breeze on my head, but there was not the slightest breath. After standing some time, I began to wonder, in an abstract way, which would give out first—the heart or the nervous system—that is to say, whether it would be a faint or a sun-stroke. The Armenian, seeing my distress, brought me the portable iron chair that the fat Hakim had ruined, but I found one might as well seek rest on the bars of the kitchen grate when a dinner is in process of preparation. I therefore stood up again—suddenly.

"When, oh, when, will they get my tent up?" I asked of my secret soul. Receiving no answer, I begged the Armenian to hurry the men, calling his attention to the fact that I was a European, "very soft man likes flower, and heat is hurt it." At last the tent was up, and thankfully I staggered into its welcome shade.

"Great Scott!" I gasped, "carry me out." For the tent, put up on the red-hot plain at midday, felt like a baker's oven on Good Friday eve. I have never been in a baker's oven on Good Friday eve, but I know what it is like.

They did not carry me out, but the Armenian brought me a charpoy, also burning hot. I lay quite still on it, simmered gently, and waited for death.

At last, it must have been after several years, I fancy, a wind came: it was a scorching one; there was no "healing in its breath," and I dried up still more. Then a whirlwind and a pillar of dust came

sweeping across the camp, tearing out the tent-pegs and overturning the tents in its course. This roused me, and I crawled to the door of the tent to see if the Amîr's wigwam had escaped. His Highness was not in a tent, but in a khirgar that had been prepared some days before. It was interlaced with shrubs ; and water had been brought, with considerable trouble, in a trench or stream from Mazar. Men outside the khirgar were constantly throwing up the water with wooden shovels on to the leafy covering. The khirgar had escaped the whirlwind.

The Armenian went off to try and get me something to drink or eat, for we had had no breakfast. All that the chief of the Commissariat Department could give him was a small piece of bread. He begged us not to inform His Highness, and promised that everything should be in readiness the next day. After a search, the Armenian discovered that my rascally cook had concealed some mutton in a dirty cloth : this he brought me, with some brown-looking snow water, and a little whiskey from the medical stores. I ate, drank, and was thankful.

At four in the afternoon a piece of ice arrived—the ice is saved from the winter in ice pits—and half an hour afterwards the Amîr sent me some ice pudding, which I devoured rapidly before it all became water. At five came dinner, but then I was at one mind with the Armenian : he said, "My wish is not I eat : very much drink I take it."

At seven in the evening the troops marched off again, for the Amîr had decided to travel at midnight to escape the heat. There were a great many of us: the Court, the Harem, the army, and the baggage of

us all. For some time before, notice had been given to the towns and villages on the route to lay in stores of grain and firewood, and to gather in their flocks from the mountains. There were of us about eight thousand men, ten thousand horses, three thousand camels, and three or four elephants.

When the troops had gone my men commenced loading up the pack-horses again. They took three hours over it, and many of the packs fastened up in the dark slipped and fell after we started: this necessitated a halt each time to reload. I was not in a cheerful state, either of mind or body, for the heat had been too much for me. I had fever rather badly, and was aching in every bone.

It was pitch dark; I could not see my horse's head nor my own hand held up. Before we got out of the camp on to the road I heard a pack-horse that had broken loose tearing about like a mad thing. We could tell where he was by the clattering of his chain. Once, in the darkness, he rushed close by me. I was convinced he would charge into some one, probably me, because no one could set my leg when it was broken. However, we got on to the road at last: we could tell it by the different ring of the horses' hoofs.

The baggage slipped and a pack tumbled off so frequently, that at last I had not patience to wait with the baggage men while they loaded up again, and the Armenian and I rode on accompanied by a soldier. I had operated on this man some time before; he therefore politely came two days' journey with me.

We had not ridden very far when suddenly out of the darkness came the challenge in Pushtu,

"Sû-kè?" "Who goes there?"

It was a sentry with orders to allow no one to pass till the Amîr had gone by!

"When is he going?" I inquired.

"Khuda medanad!" "God knows!" was the answer.

This was cheerful; and I said a great deal in English. There we sat in the dark: we couldn't go on, for the man would not let us. The annoying part was that his General, who had a tent somewhere near, was that very man who tried to bully me in the Hospital. I said to the Armenian,

"Tell him to report to the fat scoundrel who I am." The man then shouted to some one whom we could not see to take the report. After some minutes, word was brought back that the General was asleep!

"Wake the devil, then!" I shouted, for I was burning and aching with fever, and we had been waiting already half an hour. They did not dare to, they said. The sentry communed within himself, and presently said that, as I had attended him in a severe illness and had given him good medicine and made him well, he would therefore risk punishment for my sake and let me pass. He hesitated about letting the Armenian and soldier go by too, but finally yielded, on its being explained to him how impossible it was for me to travel alone. I never heard that he was punished.

We rode on again, and on for four hours, and I had to hang on to the pommel of the saddle. At last, after trying to moisten parched lips with a dried-up tongue, I said to the Armenian:—

"Look here! You will have to make some different arrangements from this. I can't stand it. It is all very well for you fellows: you are as hard as nails and are used to it. I am not."

"Sir, I very sorry. What *I* do ?"

"I don't know. You must do something ; or else I must appeal to the Amîr."

I was miserable, and, like a child, struck at the nearest. The Armenian asked if I would lie down and sleep for an hour, for, as far as he could judge, we had come only about half-way. A little further on we saw something darker than the sky, and riding up we made out that it was a hut, a little way off the road. We could hear the trickle of water, and by feeling around found a ditch or irrigation channel, or something of the sort—we couldn't see what—near the hut. With feverish haste I dismounted, scooped up three or four cupfuls and gulped it down. "Here go the microbes," I thought. I drank knowingly ; who would not ? burning with fever, in a tropical heat : but that drink nearly cost me my life. However, the "microbes" lay low for a few days. The Armenian then went off to the hut and hammered at the door. After some time he roused the inmates, and we heard them moving and speaking. Presently the door opened, and a Turkoman, with a lamp in his hand appeared.

The Armenian told him to light a fire at once and make some tea, as there was a Sirdar of the Court outside with fever. Very soon the tea was brought, and I drank several cupfuls of the hot liquid. Then I took off my spurs and helmet, and lying on the ground by the stream, put my revolver wrapped in a cloak under my head, went off into a heavy sleep.

By-and-bye I heard a cock crow, and dimly saw that the moon had risen. Later on, I was dreamily conscious of a trampling, and trampling, and an

incessant neighing. I remember thinking how wearisome it was, that incessant neighing.

Suddenly there was a terrific scream, and I was broad awake in a moment. I found in the dim light of dawn, that several other people had stopped where we had, and were sleeping. Two of their horses had got loose from their tether ropes, and were reared upright striking at one another.

The Armenian and I were close under them, and he was still sound asleep.

I woke him, and we sprang up. A little way off was the soldier holding our horses. We mounted, while the others tried to separate the screaming and fighting stallions by shouting and throwing sticks and stones at them.

It was four o'clock, and we heard the larks singing overhead. Along the road an incessant stream of baggage-horses was passing, trampling and neighing. We had come a great deal more than half-way, for we did not have far to go before we reached the camp. After half an hour or so my tent and baggage turned up.

It was Gur-i-Mar where we camped: we had travelled slowly in the darkness. The Amîr, riding on horseback, arrived with his guard soon after dawn, but it was hours before the stream of pack-horses and camels and elephants had come in.

I had breakfast as soon as the tent was up: cold mutton, biscuit, and tea, and then lay on the ground with a pillow, and went to sleep again. The fever had disappeared. Towards midday it grew frightfully hot, but I did not suffer so much, for my tent was put up in the early morning over cool ground.

In the afternoon the hot winds blew again, and we had a violent dust storm. We did not have the difficulty in procuring food that we had had the day before, and I received also a fair supply of ice.

While the hot winds blew, the rim of the glass I drank out of, though containing iced water, was quite hot to the lips. I slept a good deal during the day. At one in the morning I was called, and I dressed by the light of a candle. When I got outside I found the men were loading up. We started about three a.m. His Highness, I found, had gone on. It was excessively dark, and the Armenian and I got off the road and lost our way on the plains. We rode on trusting to our horses, but they were as much at fault as we. We wandered about, down in hollows and up on ridges, for the plain here was undulating, like downs. We were in the neighbourhood of the Abadu Pass—the valley of death.

It seemed to me we were getting too far to the left, so we branched to the right. Towards dawn it became very windy and dusty. At four o'clock it became lighter and lighter, and the larks began to sing, and after some trouble we found our way back to the road. To my great relief the sky was cloudy, and the morning comparatively cool. I had tucked a biscuit in the top of my boot, and I munched it with great satisfaction: the Armenian nearly went to sleep on horseback. We camped at Naibabad. Soon after the tents were up it began to rain: it was delicious to hear the water come pattering down.

I found we were not the only ones who had lost their way. At dawn the Amîr himself, with his guard, was found wandering off towards Russia.

That day my demoniacal black pony untied his ropes with his fore foot and teeth, and walked off. He was not found till late in the afternoon, when he was brought in looking a miserable wreck.

The fourth day was windy and comparatively cool. We started at five a.m. His Highness rode in a palanquin at the head of the army, and I rode level some distance to the right. The mountains lay to the right of us, the south, for we were nearing Tash Kurghàn: to the north was the plain, and the dust was frightful. We arrived at Tash Kurghàn at eight. We went very short stages, for when I had come to Mazar with Jan Mahomed Khan, we did the journey from Tash Kurghàn to Mazar in the day.

I sat in the tent of one of the Chamberlains, and the Page boys came and chatted and drank tea with me. They none of them seemed any the worse for the journey. At eleven o'clock I went to my own tent, which was erected on a mound outside the town, near the tent of the British Agent. A good many sick people were brought: some with fever and other illnesses, another with snake bite. The snake had bitten two men, the first one died, but the other recovered. There were a good many surgical cases, too, chiefly from horse kicks: broken legs, internal injuries, and crushed fingers were the commonest. I turned in at eight p.m.

We stayed the whole of the next day at Tash Kurghàn. I was awakened at six in the morning by the bugles, and after breakfast, finding I had a good view of the Khulm Pass, I made a careful sketch. One or two people called upon me, and then, after dressing

suitably, I mounted the little bay horse the Amîr had sent me, and rode off to salaam His Highness.

The town seemed very lively and full, compared with what it did when I first came through with Jan Mahomed. Gay-coated Courtiers and Page boys were riding about, and soldiers were marching here and there. The townspeople sat on their walls and stood on their house-tops to see the sights.

His Highness was occupying a large house in the town. He was very gracious when I made my bow, but did not look at all well.

While I was there the chief townsmen brought presents to His Highness. There was a good deal of talking, to which I did not pay much attention, till I noticed that His Highness became angry. Presently, the men who had brought presents were taken outside and thrashed severely. I was somewhat astonished, and possibly looked so, for His Highness turned to me and explained why he had ordered the men to be thrashed. A report had reached him, which he found on inquiry to be true, that these men had extorted gifts from those poorer than themselves, and had laid them before him as their own.

After lunch I asked His Highness if he were feeling quite well. He said no: the sudden alteration in his habits, and the heat of the journey, had upset him. He seemed pleased that I had asked.

I left the Durbar soon after lunch to see a man who had been seriously injured on the march. He had a broken leg: a frightful smash it was: compound and comminuted. While I was on the way there, at three p.m., I noticed an extraordinary darkness or twilight coming over everything. The

horses and other animals seemed frightened, and made curious noises. I glanced up and found we had a total eclipse of the sun. This was on June 17th, 1890. Every one was very alarmed, imagining that the eclipse betokened some serious calamity, either to the King or the country.

I was up at four the next morning, for the Armenian wanted my breakfast over, so that the tent could be packed as soon as possible. I had some cold meat and bread, which my cook had wrapped in a piece of paper overnight—this kept it from becoming disagreeably dry. Plates, knives and forks were packed, and, in lieu thereof, I used my pocket-knife and fingers. The baggage was loaded up while I breakfasted: my tent being left till last.

His Highness started at five, and we an hour afterwards. I had no adventures this day worth recounting. We were among the mountains again: the winding-paths, ravines and bridges being the predominant features. There were so many thousands on the march together that divers discomforts arose. First, the dust was choking, making the eyes and throat smart. Then "blocks" occurred, and we got jammed in some of the passes. Under these circumstances the horses at once begin kicking and fighting, and you have to look out for your shins. I had to stop by the wayside frequently to bandage up some unfortunate who had become damaged. I carried bandages and one or two splints with me.

We got into a series of valleys, and in one, which was regularly cup-shaped, with precipitous mountains around it, we were jammed for about an hour. It was quite an experience sitting in the dust and heat

among the kicking horses. However, there is an end to most things if you wait long enough, and we got out of the valley eventually. At ten a.m. we arrived at the valley of Ghuzniguk, where Ishak fought against the Amîr's soldiers. His Highness himself, I heard, was not present at the battle : his illness prevented him leaving Kabul. Here we camped.

When I rode into the town I saw the camp of my neighbour, the Mirza Abdur Rashid, already erected, and as my baggage had not yet arrived I dismounted and entered it. It was empty, and I lay on the carpet to rest. A soldier, whom I did not recognize, brought me a pillow, some iced water, and a piece of bread. I thanked him, and when I had eaten and drank I lay down again : he stood and fanned me, whereat I was thankful, till finally I fell asleep. I woke by-and-bye and found the kindly Afghan had departed. I was sitting cross-legged, leaning against the pillow, with a look of pensive melancholy on, when the Mirza and some others entered. After shaking hands we sat down again, and the Mirza said,

"Doctor Sahib bisyar manda shud." "The Doctor Sahib is very tired."

I could not admit this before the others, and I broke out into Persian : "Né manda na shudam—gurisna shudam." "Nay, I am not tired, I am hungry."

In those days I so rarely would attempt to talk Persian that they laughed ; and I had used the colloquial Afghan-Persian *gurisna* instead of the correct *gursina*. A tray of cold meat cut up into cubes, and some bread, was brought, and we helped ourselves with our fingers.

In the afternoon the Armenian sent word that my

tent was up, and I went off there and slept again for a couple of hours. After that the Armenian suggested my using his tent one day and my own the next, so that a tent could be sent on beforehand and made ready by the time I arrived. Dinner came, as usual, from His Highness's cook, and I turned in at eight. The Armenian and the servants slept on the ground outside the tent.

The next morning, June 19th, I turned out at three, and had breakfast at four o'clock: it was dawn. Soon after, I was sent for to see a man who had been stung in the night by something or other. What it was I couldn't quite make out, for the Armenian's knowledge of English names was limited. He described a creature with many legs attached to a central body. I suggested a "crab." He said he thought that might be it; on consideration I thought it hardly likely: and centipede and poisonous spider occurred to me. Whatever it were, the patient was in a state of "collapse." Perspiration stood on his face, he had a weak slow pulse, headache, and burning pains in the limbs. I was about to give medicine and port wine when His Highness came riding by on a trotting camel, followed by his guard on horseback. Seeing a group around a man on the ground, and me in the middle of it, he stopped to inquire what was the matter. They carried the man to him and explained. The Amîr asked a few questions about the symptoms: whether the man's eyeballs ached, and whether he sweated. When he heard that the skin was acting he turned to me and said:—

"Inshallah, jour méshowad." "If God will, he will become well."

He told me he had a native medicine, an excellent remedy for poisonous stings: this he was about to administer: if it were not effectual he would wish me to give European medicine. He gave an order in Persian to one of the attendants, who presently brought him a little inlaid box. His Highness unbuttoned his coat and took a small key which was hanging by a chain round his neck. He opened the box and took out a little egg-shaped casket of gold, and from that a stone. He directed a little of the stone to be scraped off, mixed with water, and laid on the wound. This stone, I was informed, was from the gall bladder of an antelope. Then he rode on, and by-and-bye I followed. The man was to stop at Ghuzniguk that day and be brought on in the evening. I left two or three doses of medicine and some wine, in case they were needed.

That day's march was pleasant: being among fields of clover and corn, it was refreshing to the eye, and there was very little dust. We camped at eight a.m. There was a cool breeze blowing all day, and I lay in my tent reading Shakespeare and drinking iced-water. The night was cool, and to me it felt almost cold. At midnight, I was called up to see the man who had been stung: they had brought him on. He was certainly better, but had retention, and I passed an instrument. The men looking after him had thought they would be on the safe side, and they gave him all the medicine and wine I had left, in addition to applying His Highness's remedy.

I went to bed again for two or three hours, and then got up and had breakfast. We started at five. Hitherto, I had been riding the black pony, "Steam-

engine," but this day, as I heard the road was good, and through valleys, I rode the young bay horse His Highness had given me. I found the road was not all valley.

We reached a ravine where the road branched into two. One branch ran to the left of the ravine, the other wound up the face of the mountain to the right. When the Armenian and I arrived at the division, we found there was a block on the left road, and, therefore, took the one on the right. We had got some distance up when a block occurred here also. The Armenian, who was leading, at once took a little by-path which ran along the edge, a little below the main road, and I followed. I did not like it. Looking directly down I could see the bottom of the ravine, and on the other side, down below, I could see the other road crowded with cavalry and baggage-horses, indiscriminately mixed. Imagine yourself riding along the sill of your bedroom window on a young untried horse, and you will get an idea of what I am trying to explain.

The path was barely three feet wide. The situation in itself was unpleasant, and I did not know how my horse would behave in mountain climbing. Some young horses are frightened, and instead of keeping their attention fixed on what is before them, they look about—mine did, and neighed when he saw the horses below—slip, become frightened, plunge and slip more : then—various complications arise.

Suddenly, I saw the Armenian pause a second—he was riding a steady old mountain pony—glance up to the road above and put his horse straight up the slope. There was a scramble, a scatter of sparks, as the hoofs struck the rock, and he was up on the road. I saw why, when he was gone, and my turn came. The path ended: rounding off into nothing. There was no room to turn back, nor to dismount: I could not stay where I was, and I put him at rocky slope. The horse looked up: a little touch of the spur, and I grasped his mane with both hands: he reared straight up, gave a spring from his hind legs, and in a moment was on the slope. I lived a long time in the next few seconds, for it flashed into me that, if we ever got up, the crush on the road above would leave no room for us, and we must inevitably slip back. But, no! he scrambled like a cat, and darting into a gap in the stream of baggage-horses, we were safe on the path. I hoped I didn't look very sickly: I felt so. Presently, we were able to escape from the stream of traffic by riding along a narrow ridge, then we descended a horribly steep slope. This, however, was earthy and stony, not bare rock, and it afforded a firmer foothold: the bay went down sideways, like a crab. In the place where we scrambled up, the rock was rough and somewhat irregular. If it had been smooth, this probably would never have been written.

Then we got on to a wide road in a valley; presently there was another block, and the Armenian turned off the road to the right. I shouted angrily,

"Look here! I am not going along any more

of your infernal paths. I would rather sit in a block for an hour : we are not in such a tremendous hurry."

He called back, "Sir! he is all right here."

The ground was broken up by huge cracks, seven or eight yards wide! A man rode out from the crush and looked, then turned his horse back and re-entered the crowded road. Away across the broken-up plain we could see a road running along the foot of a mountain. It was not very crowded, and, after all, we were not on a mountain with only bare rock under foot, so we went for it. Scrambling down the cracks or miniature ravines, some fourteen or fifteen feet deep, we waded, or rather rode, through pools of water, and scrambled up the other side. I don't know how many we climbed into and out of—but a good many. The Armenian's horse, though a good mountain-climber, was afraid of water, and he refused and shied, but had to go. When he was plunging the Armenian's turban tumbled off into a pool, but he fished it out and clapped it on his head again, wet, and cursed his horse in Persian.

At last we got on to the road at the foot of the mountain, and went some distance ; but it became excessively stony and rough.

The Armenian said, "He is become worse ; you go further."

We, therefore, branched off to the left from the road, and found ourselves in a marshy valley. In the mountains, on the left, I saw the openings of several caves, and there were waterfalls tumbling down the rocks. This valley was infested with tigers, but there were too many people about, and too much noise for that to be a danger.

Then we got among cornfields again. Where all the other roads led to I don't know, but we found a great many people riding along here, though we were not badly crowded. I came alongside of the Page boy who used to live next door to me in Mazar, but we lost him again in the crowd. We went on and on through villages, where trees and vegetables were growing—a refreshing sight after a life in Mazar. Further on, the roads apparently converged, for the lanes became more and more crowded and more and more dusty, till I was compelled to tie a handkerchief over my nose and mouth. In one valley seeing a few cows and goats feeding near some huts, we branched off to try and get a drink: the peasants brought some milk in a wooden vessel which the Armenian poured into my cup and handed to me. He preferred drinking whey, of which the peasants had a plentiful supply, for it is a popular drink, but advised me not to drink any as it is apt to disagree. We had as much milk and whey as we wanted for two pice, that is a little more than a farthing.

Finally, we neared the suburbs of the town of Haibuk. The crush became greater and the dust awful. Every one's hair, beard, eyebrows, and eyelashes were white. Those who had started as youths in the morning looked grey-haired men, and were hardly recognizable.

The people of the town turned out, and, regardless of the dust and the heat of the sun—they were used to it, I suppose—sat on their garden walls to look at us.

I had another scare: it was in the town. As we were going along we saw an elephant in front

of us. Horses are generally frightened at elephants, but mine went quietly enough, so long as the elephant was going away from him, and he could see him; but just before we reached the river we passed him. The river is not very wide, perhaps fifteen feet, but it has very steep rocky banks. There was a narrow bridge across, and the Armenian being ahead of me, leading the way, got across at once. Before I reached the bank, a man sitting between the packs of a baggage-horse, got on the bridge and went slowly. My horse having the elephant behind him plunged furiously, and as the elephant advanced, kept shying round, sidling nearer and nearer to the edge of the bank. I could not get on to the bridge, because the fool on his pack-horse blocked it. The Armenian and others, seeing the danger I was in, shouted at the man; he did not hurry: I doubt if he understood. When we had got to the very edge of the bank—only just in time, the bridge was clear, and my horse darted across. The bridge was a narrow affair, about four feet wide, made of trunks of trees and cross-bars, with earth levelled on the top. I could not take my horse on till it was clear, for I knew he would charge the pack-horse, and the *best* I could hope for then would be a leg broken against one of the mule trunks. I am a mild man, as I said before, but if I had happened to have had a hunting crop in my hand, I would have woke up that somnolent Afghan. The whole business did not occupy a minute, not half a minute; but when a horse is frightened, I need scarcely say he does not look where he is going.

Riding through the town we came to an embank-

ment covered with grass, an aqueduct, along the top of which ran a stream of very clear water. I dismounted, and sat under the shade of the trees by the stream and washed the dust off my head and hands. It was delightfully cool and breezy, and there was an excellent view of the fort, a part of the town, the mountains, and the river down below.

The Armenian went on with the servants to find the place where the "Quartermaster" had given orders for my tent to be pitched. As I sat alone by the stream several people, whom I knew, went by and saluted. After about an hour, one of the servants came back to conduct me to the tent. We descended the embankment, and rode down a lane leading to the river. My tent was in an orchard on the other side. The river was rather wide but shallow, and we forded it on our horses. We got into the orchard by scrambling through a gap in the wall.

I found there were other tents besides mine in the orchard, and some horses were endeavouring to graze. The Armenian ordered the horses out and the other tents to be moved further away.

My tent was put up on a mound about six feet high, and I went in and sat on the carpet. It was stifling after the breezy hill. The trees and high walls of the orchard kept off the breeze without sheltering my tent from the sun. There was no view, except of dusty leaves and brown earth—the grass was withered. I was tired, thirsty, and hungry; there was nothing to drink or eat, and I had no tobacco. I growled at everybody who came within reach: and the ants crawled down my neck and up my sleeve, and black grasshoppers jumped in my face and walked

up my back. As soon as the cook arrived, which was some time afterwards, he hurried off to the bazaar. He came back in about half an hour with two teapots full of tea: I gulped down ten or eleven cupfuls, and then made an enjoyable meal off some cold mutton that the cook fished out of the baggage; after that I unearthed a cigar from one of the trunks, and felt more at peace with the world; for the crawling creatures did not sting, though they were disagreeable.

These are the ordinary everyday incidents of a march. As a rule one does not find the opportunity to write them down, and they are forgotten the next day. I, however, happened to write a letter home that evening and I have just copied it.

There was no meat to be obtained in the bazaar, and I gave the Armenian four shillings to buy a sheep; for although my meals came from His Highness's kitchen, those of the servants and the Armenian did not.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ARRIVAL IN KABUL

The Durbar in Haibuk. "Rustom's throne." The ancient caves. The wounded Governor: Kabul dentistry. The Amîr and the sketches: His Highness's joke. Another Durbar: the Amîr's prescription. The erring Hakim. Courtesy of His Highness. "Microbes." Illness. Elephant riding. A grateful peasant. Dangerous passes. The Durbar at Shush-Bûrjah: the hot river. Accidents on the "Tooth-Breaker." Akrab-Abad. The quarrel of the cooks: the result. The camp of the camels. A pet dog. Pushed over the edge. Evil results of "temper." Kindness of Amîr. A cheap banquet. Coal. Arrival of Englishmen. Durbar at Kalai Kasi. The Amîr again as a physician. Approach to Kabul. Reception by the Princes. The "High garden." The Pavilion. Malek the Page. Arrival of the Amîr: greeting of the Princes. The Reception. Arrival at the Workshops. Hospitality.

We remained in Haibuk for nearly a fortnight, the army being camped on the mountain. I sat all day in the stifling tent drinking iced water and reading Shakespeare. At intervals during the day, sick and injured people were brought and I attended to them. But those wretched "microbes" that I had swallowed in my fever on the plains began to work their wicked will on me, and I became ill.

Four days after we arrived His Highness held a Durbar. After I had seen my patients I mounted the bay and rode through the town to where His Highness was sitting. This was in a rather large garden attached to a house. There were some big trees and a good many flowers in the garden. Among

the latter, I remember noticing the "Fleur de Lys," or French lily. A pond or tank, supplied by an irrigation channel, was in the garden, and near it sat His Highness on a couch covered with silk and cloth of gold. The couch was shaded by a large red and white awning. The Courtiers and Pages stood near, and all around were cornfields. I had taken with me a catalogue of revolvers from a London firm (Colt's) that His Highness had asked me, with the help of the Armenian, to translate. When he had examined the translation he spoke of the city of Haibuk, and explained how he intended to fortify it, and how the water supply would be ensured. He told me there was a remarkable ancient monument near Haibuk, and some ancient caves of considerable interest. He advised my riding out to see them, as they were not very far from the town. Lunch was brought, and afterwards His Highness gave me a plateful of nectarines as big as peaches.

I rode out the next day with the Armenian and some others, to see the ancient monument.

I found that a small rocky hill, or spur, at the foot of the mountains, had been rounded at the apex into a cupola: the rock all round it being cut away as a sort of trench, or moat, some twenty feet deep and eight or nine feet across. On the top of the rounded cupola was, apparently, a tiny temple, flat-topped, with a doorway on one side flanked by pillars, which, to the best of my recollection, were Greek in style. We got across the trench, or moat, and were able to examine the structure on the top. Apparently, it was cut out of the rock. The doorway was cut inwards for about two feet, and ended in flat

rock. Writing from recollection—it was in 1890 I saw it—I should say the "temple" was about seven feet high and five or six feet square at the base. The rounded cupola was, perhaps, thirty feet across. This they told me was called "Rustom's Throne."

We then went to see the caves, which were near. They opened on the face of the mountain. The largest—used then as a storehouse for grain—had an entrance level with the ground, and a larger opening some twenty feet higher up. It was, therefore, perfectly light inside. The roof was domed and ornamented in the middle with a huge sunflower, treated decoratively. The same style of decoration was repeated on the walls. The other caves were smaller and dark.

I made sketches of the caves, and of Rustom's Throne.

The next morning His Highness sent for me to see the Governor of Haibuk, who had been wounded some time before by a bullet through the roof of his mouth and upper jaw. After the removal of pieces of necrosed bone, I suggested that a gold plate should be fitted into the roof of the mouth. His Highness said there was a man in Kabul who had been taught by an English dentist, Mr. O'Meara, how to take the model of the mouth in wax: he could make a suitable plate, and, if necessary, fix on artificial teeth. I was about to retire then, but His Highness invited me to stay and drink tea, and a chair was placed for me near him. He said he should much like to see my sketch-book, as he had heard I had made a drawing of Rustom's Throne. The Armenian at once galloped off to my tent to fetch

it. His Highness was much amused at some of the sketches, particularly of one of the Armenian where he lay on the ground in front of the fire—I had drawn it one evening in Mazar. He said he looked as though he were—to put it mildly—suffering from alcoholic intoxication.

As the Armenian was a Christian, and therefore not forbidden to drink alcohol, this mild joke amused everybody except the Armenian, and the more ashamed and angry he looked, the more they laughed. Of the other sketches His Highness recognized whom they were meant for: but those of Rustom's Throne, the caves, and the sketch of the Khulm Pass, His Highness admired so exceedingly, that I had to cut them out of the book at once and give them to him. That is the reason I have to describe Rustom's Throne from memory.

His Highness then showed me a block of very beautiful clear ice, which he said had been obtained from a cavern near Haibuk. He asked me to take the block away and test its purity.

There was another Durbar on July 1st, and by this time the "microbes" had got firm hold of me. I went to the Durbar. His Highness had heard that I was ill, and I told him I had not with me the medicine I wished to take. His Highness asked, Would I take native medicine if he prescribed it? I said I should be most grateful to His Highness if he would honour me so far. His Highness gave some directions to a Hakim, who presently brought a small jar. The Amîr told me it contained a medicine he was himself taking. With a little silver spoon he took some dark-looking confection out of the jar, made a bolus

of it, and gave it to me. It tasted hot and very nice. There was no more in the pot, and he sent the Hakim away to make some fresh. It was then that my mind became troubled within me, for I knew the Hakim loved me not.

Presently the jar was brought back, and as they were about to give it me, His Highness asked for it. He scooped a little out with a spoon, and was raising it to his lips, when the Hakim stopped him and whispered in his ear. The Amîr turned and looked at him, and the Hakim hurried away with a very red face. By-and-bye he returned with the jar. Again the Amîr took it, and looking at me, he raised a spoonful to his lips and swallowed it. He then gave the jar into the hands of the Armenian, who immediately brought it to me.

One need not live in the East to understand the courtesy and kindness of the Amîr's action ; but to appreciate fully the honour he did me, one must be conversant with Oriental customs. To taste a medicine before handing it to the patient is the duty of an Oriental physician when he is attending the King. I was a servant—but also a stranger and a guest—and the Amîr treated me as though I had been a Prince.

I cannot say whether the medicine would have cured me or not, for in two days' time we had to be on the march again : which was bad for me.

Then came a time, the details of which I do not care to recall too vividly to my mind, for the " microbes " were just as venomous and wicked as if they had been Hindustani Interpreters at the Afghan Court, and that is saying much.

Instead of being in bed, I had to jog along on

horseback half the day. Instead of a sick man's diet, I got a little cold meat and bread when and how I could; sometimes after a fast of ten or eleven hours. Under the circumstances, of what use could the Amîr's or any one else's medicine be?

The first day's march was very beautiful: by the banks of a river which ran through cultivated valleys and ravines: and here and there were cascades. At the end of the march I was faint, and the Armenian rushed off to the medical stores for some brandy. He then sent a report in to the Amîr, and the next day His Highness kindly sent me his Shikari elephant. Riding the elephant was much easier work than horse riding: I could take a supply of suitable food, and I picked up again. We started at four in the morning, before the others: for an elephant goes slowly, and cavalry and baggage-horses shy, and then on the mountains, or in a crowd, accidents happen.

I was rocked along through gorges and valleys and villages. In a village, if a wall were in the way, the elephant kicked it over with his foot, and walked across the garden or orchard, as the case might be. We started at two the next morning, for the road was hilly. The cavalry horses were still tethered in line, and, as we passed them, they struggled and pulled against the foot-ropes to escape the awful creature. It was moonlight, and the deep shadows and gleaming rocks and peaks were the reality of Doré's fantastic ideas. When we camped, patients were brought to me from the villages as well as from the army: one peasant who had brought a sick child presented me with a lamb.

The day after—Sunday—we had to make a long detour to avoid a gorge that was too narrow for the elephant to get through.

On Monday morning I turned out at half-past four. It felt bitterly cold, and I put on an ulster. We waited awhile, but no elephant turned up. Some said he was ill with fever ; others said the Sultana had sent for him. They therefore saddled the black pony and I mounted.

We had such awful mountain passes to traverse that the camels and pack-horses were compelled to go another and much longer road. One path I remember on the side of a mountain : it was about five feet wide : in one place it had crumbled away, and was hardly two feet wide, with a precipice going sheer down. The path went steeply up and steeply down, and was covered with little loose stones. It was no good trying to ride it, for on account of the loose pebbles, a horse could not climb it with a man on his back. I got off, put the bridle over my arm, and, scotching my feet on firmer pieces of rock, managed to get up, the horse scrambling after me. Though I was ill and weak, I could not help a burst of laughter at the Armenian as he crawled up on all fours.

On Tuesday, at ten a.m., we reached Kamard or Shush-Bûrjah, and my tent was put up in an orchard. I lay under a walnut-tree all day and saw patients. We stayed here three days, and His Highness held a Durbar. I went, and His Highness told me about the source of a river there : how it came from a tunnel at the foot of the mountain, and the water was hot ; and how it rendered the valley

warm in the winter. I had lunch with His Highness, and then went to attend to a man with a broken thigh.

On the Friday, we started again and crossed that awful mountain, the "Tooth-Breaker," Dandan Shikan. I found that the road had been greatly improved since I was last there. As it was, however, there were a great many accidents. We went on to Saighan, and they brought one old fellow of seventy to me, the uncle of the Chief Secretary, or Dabier-ul-Mulk. His horse had slipped sideways on Dandan Shikan, and he had broken his right arm just below the shoulder and his right thigh just above the knee. I put him up in splints, and he was carried the rest of the journey in a sort of cradle slung on a camel; another injured man being on the other side. The old man quite recovered.

We camped one day at Akrab-abad, and though it was the middle of July, the night was excessively cold. The winter there is bitter, hence the name—Akrab meaning a scorpion. It is about ten thousand feet above the sea.

We reached the western extremity of the Bamian Valley, and His Highness's chief cook had a row with mine. Between the two I received some beef-tea that was sour. The Hakim Abdur Rashid, having been sent by His Highness to inquire how I was, the Armenian, with much vigour and energy, detailed the iniquities of the cooks. The matter was reported to His Highness: he sent for the cooks and informed them that if I did not recover he would blow them to pieces from the cannon's mouth. My cook bolted before we reached Kabul. I suppose

his "prognosis" of the case was unsatisfactory. I don't know where he went to, and I did not see him again till I was better.

We rode through the Bamian Valley and passed the colossal Figures, the Caves, the ancient Cities, and the modern fortified Villages. It was very beautiful, and I really fancied I was better. There were cornfields, beanfields, grass, trees, and river.

The soldiers camped at the end of the valley, beyond Zohak-i-Marhan, where it is narrow. There were some camels camped here also, and their weird moans and bubbling cries echoing back from the rocks were horrible to hear. They sounded like the hopeless cries of the damned: at least, I thought so —I was evidently morbid.

Here a soldier of the Amîr's bodyguard quarrelled with a comrade and killed him. I don't know if he were hanged.

I saw a little brown spaniel leading a camel along by a rope. I really do not know whether a dog is "unclean" or not, but the Afghans occasionally, though rarely, make pets of them. They more often make pets of partridges—a speckled bird, with a curious rippling cry—and train them to fight. I have often seen a bird trotting along after his master: it looks very odd.

We went through the ravine where the water dashes down and enters a tunnel in the rock. Further on, a camel in the crush was pushed over the edge and fell with his load down the ravine. Its young one sprang after it. The Amîr passing some time afterwards with his guard, halted to look at the place. The horse of one of the guard was

frightened, and backed away from the precipice: the man, incensed, cut it violently with the cruel double-lashed Afghan whip; the horse gave a bound forward, and he and his rider disappeared over the edge.

From here the road led over high mountains, and it was very cold and rainy. I had to have occasional doses of brandy from the medical stores in order to keep going, and at one place His Highness, when he arrived, was kind enough to stop at my tent to inquire how I was. The next day, he sent his palanquin to me, and I was borne along on the shoulders of four sturdy Afghans. I was not a heavy burden, unfortunately, and they hurried along up hill and down dale, over rocks and through defiles at a pace that was to me, in my feebleness, terrifying.

We camped at Gardandiwal. This was the occasion I referred to some way back, on which I gave a banquet to a dozen men—the relays of palanquin bearers—which cost me rather less than sixpence a head. I ought to say that the men refused at first, lest the fact might reach His Highness's ears and displease him.

Here His Highness sent me some specimens to test for coal. I am not a geologist, but, as far as I could judge, from my rough tests, there was, in the specimens he sent me, some coal and a good deal of stone.

After this I became very ill, and His Highness sent several times to inquire how I was. One day he sent for the Armenian and gave him directions as to the diet I should have. He hoped I should be better on the third day from then, as he wished me to ride

into Kabul with him. He said that brandy was not good for me, as it tended to produce congestion of the liver.

The next day we arrived at Kalai Kasi, within a few miles of Kabul, and Mr. Pyne and the two other English engineers rode out from Kabul to welcome His Highness. Afterwards they came to my tent. I was very pleased to see them. They were the first English I had seen since Captain Griesbach left Mazar, more than a year before. They were very jolly, but their vigorous energy was, to a poor debilitated mortal, rather overpowering. I remember Pyne inquired why I sat on the ground : I explained that I had no chair, it was broken. He also asked why I did not have my hair cut : I told him there was no barber, and that we had been on the march a month and a half. After dinner they rode back with a guard to Kabul.

Early the next morning His Highness held a Durbar, and at five o'clock I girded up my loins, mounted a horse, and rode to His Highness's quarters. Outside the khirgar, or wigwam, where His Highness slept, there was erected a large red and white awning. Under this, in the shade, were several chairs and two or three portable tables covered with fruit and flowers. Several people, Officers and Courtiers, were sitting there, and I joined them. Soon, we heard that His Highness had risen, and I was sent for into the khirgar. His Highness was sitting on the couch, and on a little table by him were some biscuits and fruit, and a cup of tea. He enquired very kindly after my health, suggesting various remedies, and gave me advice as regards diet. He would

not hear of my riding on horseback into Kabul, but said I must be carried in the palanquin. He said many kind things, and finally gave me "Rûkhsat," or permission to depart, for I was feeble. I returned to the tent till we were ready to start.

The lanes, cornfields, fruit trees, and general freshness and greenness of the suburbs of Kabul reminded me of England, and were most grateful to the eye after the dusty barrenness of Mazar.

Presently we turned off from the Kabul road; and some way off I saw a hill with crowds of people on it. There were rows of spectators on each side of the road leading to it. Evidently the grand reception was not to be in the town. I had hoped to get away somewhere and rest.

I became conscious that I was not shaven, and that my collar was an old one and frayed. I had one, among my much-tattered linen—the Afghan washermen dash your linen on a stone to wash it, and starch it with flour—I had one, carefully saved for this very event, but alas! it was in a portmanteau!

The Armenian said, "Sir, you not care it. Highness know you ill. Other men, who is!"

There was no help for it, and we reached the top of the hill. Here, under a large awning, was a circle of Orientals, in their robes and turbans, seated on the ground. They were the Maleks and Chiefs from the Kabul province. At one side of the circle seated on chairs were His Highness's two eldest sons, the Princes Habibullah and Nasrullah. I got out of the palanquin and walked feebly into the middle of the circle and bowed to the Princes.

They inquired politely after my health, and Prince

Habibullah, turning to the Armenian, said in Persian, "He looks very ill, what is the matter?"

Then he gave orders for me to be taken to the "Baghi Buland," or "High Garden," on a hill close by. Accordingly I was carried there. This was where the reception of His Highness was to take place.

There was a temporary pavilion erected, gaily adorned with hangings of crimson and white, and with large bouquets of flowers. It was furnished with carpets, couches, tables, and chairs. There was a part raised some three steps, which commanded a view from the window of a little artificial waterfall, a fountain, trees, and the lovely Baghi Shah Valley. This valley lies outside Kabul, just north of the Chahar Bagh Valley, and separated from it by the Asmai Mountains.

A few people were collected in the Pavilion, and the Armenian brought a chair for me. I knew no one, and felt rather out of it. Presently Malek, the Amîr's favourite Page, entered, and every one stood to receive him. He took no notice of any one, but rushed up to me and inquired how I was. At once the manner of those in the Pavilion altered. When a European in Kabul has become of interest to the Amîr, every one bows the knee—metaphorically speaking—and he has a good time. But once let His Highness's interest wane, and, as it struck me then, the said European would be likely to have a very middling time.

A crowd began to collect on the Baghi Buland Hill, some entering the Pavilion.

By-and-bye there was a rattle of kettledrums, a

confused murmur of many voices—but no cheering as in England—and the Amir approached, riding on horseback. There was a great deal of bustle, and suddenly the two Princes appeared just outside the Pavilion. The Amir, having reached the top of the hill, dismounted: the crowd opened, and the two Princes advancing, knelt and kissed his Highness's feet. He raised each one and kissed him on the forehead. The Amir then entered the Pavilion; walking with a stick. I took off my solar helmet and bowed with the rest, and His Highness went up the steps to the raised part of the hall. The Armenian whispered—

"Follow Highness."

The Amir took his seat upon a couch near a large window: in front of him was a small table with some lovely roses on it.

The Courtiers, the more important Chiefs and I, were standing near. His Highness caught sight of me almost directly, and most kindly ordered a chair to be placed in a particular spot near the couch, to the right, and a little behind where he sat.

Then a salute of several guns was fired: the vibration of the air making the Pavilion shake, we adjourned temporarily to another room.

On our return Mr. Pyne and the two other Engineers arrived. Pyne looked very smart in a European frock-coat, with a flower in his button-hole: the two other Englishmen were neatly dressed in corduroy riding-suits and long boots.

The Amir shook hands with Mr. Pyne, spoke to him for a few moments, and then chairs were placed for them near mine.

About midday I began to feel dreadfully tired, and as some people had already taken their departure, I turned round and asked Pyne if he cared to go then.

He said that the Prince had given orders that we were to wait till the roads were clear, and I waited a little longer. Presently, as I began to feel giddy, I said to the Armenian—

"I am going."

He said: "Shahzada Sahib said, a little you stop till——"

"Can't help it," I said.

I stood up, stepped to the Amîr's couch and bowed.

"Rûkhsat?" said His Highness. "Are you going?"

"Bali, Sahib," I said. "Yes, sir."

His Highness kindly said, "Bisyar-khôb. Ba aman-i-Khuda." "Very well. Good-bye."

I bowed and retired.

Outside the Pavilion I got into the palanquin and was carried to Pyne's room at the workshops.

I found him there: he had left soon after I had, and, galloping into Kabul by another road, had arrived before me.

He said I looked ill at the Durbar, and he made me drink a tumblerfull of sparkling hock at once. I stayed with him a fortnight, till my house was ready. He was exceedingly hospitable, and with well meant, but somewhat mistaken kindness, forced upon me whisky, beer, hock, and all sorts of unsuitable food. He tried to brighten me up by taking me about the workshops and showing me

what progress had been made since I had left Kabul, and in the evening he told me yarns and stories without number. Once or twice it was almost too much, and I became giddy and faint. He was very kind, but I was thankful when I got to my house and could lie down.

With proper diet and medicine I began to improve, but it was months before I quite recovered.

CHAPTER XXII

LIFE IN KABUL

The Îd festival: salaam to the Amîr; the educating of Afghans. Amîr's visit to the Workshops: under the mulberry tree: the Amîr's speech. Products of the Workshops. Royal Lunch at Endekki; the Invitation; the Brougham: the Palace: Lunch: the Drawing-room: the Piano. Evening illumination of gardens: fireworks: dinner. The unreliable Interpreter. A night at the Palace. Commencement of intrigue. Gifts to the Amîr: the presentation. The rebuke to Prince Nasrullah. The barking dog. Noah's Ark: the nodding images. Illness again: the Amîr's advice: the effect thereof. An afternoon call: conversation. Illness of the Amîr: the visit: His Highness's question: the Amîr's good breeding. An earthquake as an experience. Report on Kabul brandy: Mr. Pyne's opinion: the Interpreter again: the Amîr's perplexity. The Hindu's objection. The mysterious midnight noise: the solution of the mystery. Mumps. The wedding of Prince Nasrullah: invitation from the Sultana: the Fête: a band of pipers. The Prince and his bride. Overwork at the Hospital. One of the troubles of a Ruler. Scenery near Bala Hissar. The Amîr duck shooting. The sick chief: his imprudence: his amusements. The will of the clan.

FOUR days after our arrival in Kabul, namely on July 28th, the Mahomedan Festival of Îd commenced, and His Highness held a Durbar in the "Salaam Khana." I went, accompanied by the Armenian. I should have been better in bed. We waited in the large hall, I talking to one of the Chief Secretaries. Presently we heard the rattle of drums, indicating that the Amîr had arrived. He did not, however, come in, and I was wondering where he was, when a Page came and spoke to the Armenian, and he and I and the Secretary were conducted upstairs to the

Guest House that I have already described. His Highness, seated in an armchair, was almost alone in the room. After I had made my bow an arm-chair was placed for me opposite the Amîr, so that he could speak to me conveniently. His Highness had been talking some little while when Mr. Pyne arrived ; he continued talking to us both for some time. He referred to the work we both of us had done : said that it was a means of educating his people ; referred to my having become ill in his service, and promised me some months' leave of absence that winter, in order that I might recover my health in my own country.

Presently, lunch was served, and he ordered for me broth thickened with rice—"Shola."

Three days after this, the Amîr visited the workshops. I did not join the party until the Amîr had finished inspecting the machinery, but went to see two or three people who were sick. When I returned to the shops I found His Highness had finished inspecting. He was seated in the grounds under the shade of a huge mulberry tree. A table was placed in front of him on which were fruit and sweetmeats.

There were seated at the table, on the Amîr's right, the two eldest Princes. Opposite His Highness were Sirdar Usuf Khan, the Amîr's uncle ; Mr. Pyne : and the Dabier-ul-Mulk, or Chief Secretary. I bowed to His Highness, and he ordered a chair to be placed for me on his left. We ate some sweets and fruit, and His Highness expressed his great satisfaction at the progress that had been made in the workshops. His saying of "My money, your work, and God's help will produce what I need" has become proverbial.

There were stationary engine, steam-hammer,

steam-saws, cartridge plant, a minting machine, and a blast smelting furnace.

Big guns, machine guns, rifles, swords, leather work, soap, candles, and coin, were made by the busy hands of hundreds of men, Afghans and Hindustanis, under the direction of Mr. Pyne and his assistants. Since then more machinery has been added to the shops, but they have been so recently described in the public press that I need not go into further detail.

When His Highness had finished speaking he shook hands with Mr. Pyne, and acknowledging the salutations of the others, he departed.

I heard that a soldier was detected slipping a cartridge into his rifle just as His Highness entered the shops, but that he was seized before he could do any mischief, even if he desired.

Four days after the Royal visit to the workshops His Highness became the guest of the two eldest Princes at the Palace of Endekki. This is about six miles out of Kabul, in the Chahardeh Valley.

About two o'clock in the afternoon came a letter inviting the Englishmen, Mr. Pyne, myself, and one of the two Engineers, to meet His Highness there. A small brougham was sent for us. The roads about Kabul are good, and His Highness and the Princes have several carriages.

The Palace of Endekki is at the top of a small hill. In the distance it has rather the appearance of a Greek temple with pillars around it. After climbing the hill one mounts a flight of stone steps to a terrace, from the centre of which rises the main body of the Palace. A few more steps, and one enters a lobby which leads into the long hall. This has a row of pillars in

the centre supporting the roof, and is lit on each side by three large windows. It was furnished somewhat elaborately in the European style; resembling very much, though it was smaller than, the Salaam Khana, or great Durbar Hall in Kabul.

Lunch was brought soon after our arrival, and we three English sat at a table by ourselves, being waited upon by the chief Hindustani cook.

After lunch His Highness invited us into a small room opening into the long hall at the opposite end from the lobby. This was a very pretty little room: one side of it was bowed or rounded, and had three large windows in it overlooking the valley. The room was furnished like an English drawing-room, even to the Collard and Collard piano. His Highness asked if either of us could play, and Mr. Pyne sat down and played some hymns. It seemed very strange to hear "Abide with Me" in Afghanistan, among Mussulmans. Shortly after this Mr. Pyne felt rather faint and ill. There was no whisky nor brandy to be had, and the Amîr suggested champagne, but Mr. Pyne thought he would rather go back to the shops. He therefore made his adieux to the Amîr and the Princes; and the Armenian was sent with him. To interpret for me was a Hindustani—a man with more polish of manner than the Armenian.

In the evening we accompanied His Highness and the Princes into the Palace gardens, and arm-chairs were placed for us on the terrace. As soon as it was dark the gardens and the grounds around the foot of the hill were lit up with innumerable little coloured lamps. Rockets were let off from the valley, and we leant back in our chairs and admired.

Later on we had dinner out in the gardens. Afterwards the engineer, Mr. Myddleton, asked me if we could not leave, as he wanted to get to his work early in the morning. I accordingly told the Hindustani to inquire. He answered that he was sure His Highness wished us to stay the night at Endekki. We were exceedingly doubtful about this: there seemed no reason why we should stay; but the Hindustani was so certain about it that finally we yielded, especially as the Hindustani hinted that probably His Highness would be offended if we asked. The real fact was, as we suspected, that the man wanted to stay himself.

A comfortable little room was given us in a block of buildings attached to the Palace and built on the side of the hill. Charpoys and cigarettes were provided, and waiters attended upon us.

We left directly after breakfast the next morning, the brougham taking us back. Pyne had quite recovered, and was at work in the shops. He took the Engineer to task somewhat for remaining at the Palace all night. I explained how we had been misled by the Interpreter.

This man presently began to pay court to me. He came frequently to see me: was very deferential and polite: wished to teach me Persian; and he dropped occasional innuendoes and slighting remarks about the Armenian. He was always hanging about the Palace whenever I went there, and with a smile edged in a word of correction whenever the Armenian translated. It annoyed me. I did not want his corrections. I quite understood the Armenian, and knew enough Persian to tell whether he were giving

me the meaning of the Amîr's words honestly or not. When, on the other hand, the Hindustani translated my words to His Highness, he spoke such flowery Persian and worked in so much Arabic that I could not follow him. I foresaw trouble, for he was one of those who say the thing which is not.

About this time a box containing presents, that I had written home for from Turkestan, arrived, and I sent to inquire when I might have the honour of laying them before His Highness. A day was appointed; and after I had amputated a man's leg, which happened to be arranged for the same day, I went to the Erg Palace. His Highness received me most graciously. He was sitting in the Octagonal Hall that contained the pictures of the Houses of Parliament. The portrait that I had painted of His Highness was also hanging there. It had been sent to India to be framed and glazed. The Amîr had had plate glass put over it, ordering a looking glass to be bought large enough and the silver to be scraped off the back.

Prince Habibullah, one or two Secretaries, and several Page boys were in the room with His Highness when I arrived. I sat on a couch in a convenient position, and presently Prince Nasrullah entered. I stood up and bowed as he went by. I do not know whether the Prince recognized me: he did not return my bow. He went to His Highness and salaamed. His Highness said something to the Prince that I did not hear, and the Prince was kind enough to return at once to where I was sitting and inquire if I were well. I thanked His Highness the Prince for his kind inquiries, but I did not rise.

Then the presents were examined. They were

not of any consequence, but were such as I could give. It had struck me that a writing-cabinet and paper stamped with the Royal name, might be a convenience to the Amîr. I had sent for one, therefore, and had directed the cabinet to be decorated with an original design in metal by an artist friend. There were various other things, all of which His Highness examined. For the little Prince, Mahomed Omer, were several mechanical toys. The Page boys gathered in a cluster behind the Amîr, as he was examining these. Among them was a mechanical dog that jumped and barked, and the boys were much interested, and there was a good deal of laughter, when one of the Page boys snatched his hand away as the Amîr made the dog jump at him. Then came a Noah's ark, with some well-modelled animals, all of which His Highness stood up on the table. A model steam-engine excited a good deal of interest, as did the little tin men, who walked rapidly along, dragging their little tin carts. A toy sword and rifle the Amîr decided to put by till the Prince was older. For the Sultana, there were various novelties in the way of brooches and fans; but these were not examined at that time. Some nodding china images amused the Amîr very much. Altogether, His Highness must have been three hours examining everything, for I went to the Palace at one and got back home at five.

The excitement of the various Durbars and dinners did me no good, and during the month of August—the bad month in Kabul—I was confined to my bed. Just at that time, His Highness sent a carpenter

to me for instructions, so that a framework might be made for the canvas of a full-length portrait. I am sorry to say the portrait was never painted.

Mr. Pyne called two or three times to ask me to go for a ride with him. That being an impossibility, he sat down and told me some amusing stories.

One day, the Armenian was sent for to the Durbar, and when he returned, he told me that His Highness had been enquiring as to my diet. I was not to have any more beef-tea, and no brandy or whisky: I had not drunk them in Mazar, why should I drink them in Kabul? I was to have rice and sago only.

Sago boiled in water for breakfast and rice boiled in water for dinner are abominably nasty, especially if you can vary the diet only by putting salt in one day and leaving it out the next. I never knew what real unadulterated hunger was till then. I dreamed of Roast-beef and Yorkshire pudding, of duck and green peas, but being powerless in bed, I had to put up with the rice and sago and—became better. I have hated them ever since, which—in the abstract—seems ungrateful.

One day they brought a man into my bedroom, who looked even more of a scarecrow than I did. I looked at him, asked a question or two, and said feebly to Hafiz, the compounder,

"Recipe, pulveris ipecacuanhæ grana viginti, statim sumendus"—"boiled rice and sago—bed." He got well before I did: he was used to the diet. A little girl of eleven, who had had fever for six months, was brought by His Highness's orders: all she needed was quinine.

Shere Ali Khan, my friend of Mazar, called to

see me one day while the Armenian was out, and we had a long and amusing conversation in Persian, supplemented occasionally by signs. We quite understood one another. We discussed anatomy, climate, diamonds, marriage; and I remember we compared the customs of European ladies with those of Oriental ladies. Shere Ali defended polygamy. We had an earthquake in the evening—not that it had anything to do with the conversation. At different times many people called. Some of them were ill and wished to be prescribed for.

In the beginning of September, I heard that His Highness was ill with gout, and I wrote to ask if I should come and see him. The answer came that I was to visit him the next day. Accordingly, I gathered myself together, mounted my horse, and rode slowly to the Erg Palace. The Armenian had brought me a walking-stick, so that I could get across the Palace gardens. I found His Highness was in one of the upper rooms. Getting upstairs was rather breathless work, and I had to take my time over it.

In the lobby outside the room were several Military Officers and Secretaries seated on the ground. Through the open door I saw His Highness lying on a couch. I bowed, and he called me in. The room was very small, and a chair was put for me near the head of the bed. Tea was brought for me in a glass mug set in silver. His Highness then described to me his symptoms. He had gouty inflammation of the right foot and knee; pains in most of his joints, and sciatica: he was feverish and shivering. I told him what treatment I should adopt if I had charge of

the case. His Highness said that the Hakims, who were attending him, had bled him, and had leeched the inflamed joints. I said I hoped the treatment would not make him worse afterwards. By-and-bye I took my leave.

I went the next day to see His Highness, and he expressed himself as feeling much better. The pain was nearly gone. He told me that he had procured an oil from the colchicum plant, and this had been gently rubbed into the inflamed joints.

Two Page boys were in the room. One was "massaging" His Highness's painful leg, and the other waving away flies with a fan. His Highness spoke very kindly to me, and suddenly asked if I intended to marry when I went to England on leave. I was rather taken aback when he asked, whereat the Page boys smiled; but, summoning up courage, I said yes. His Highness promised me a very substantial wedding present. Later on, after we had had tea, I heard the hubble-bubble going round in the next room, and mechanically pulling out a cigar I began cutting the tip off. Suddenly it struck me I was in the King's bedroom. I felt somewhat ashamed, for I had not been invited to smoke. However, His Highness had seen me take the cigar out; and I rather lamely asked if he minded the smell of smoke. He said, "Not in the least," and, seeing my confusion, he at once put me at my ease by calling for a cigarette, which he lit and smoked.

The next morning early my house was found to be on fire: fortunately it was discovered in time, and the neighbours were *not* fined for setting it alight.

That night I was awakened suddenly by an awful

earthquake. The heaving of the floor, the creaking of the beams, and the rattling of the windows increased and increased. I sprang out of bed and tried to light a candle. I could not find the matchbox; then I found it, opened it, took a match hurriedly, and broke it: took another and tried to strike the wrong end, then another, and I began to think whether I hadn't better make a bolt for it at once. At last I got a light and the candle caught: it was half-past one. I stood a moment or two with the candle in my hand, and presently I fancied the rocking and creaking was becoming less: then it occurred to me that, after all, the house had stood so many earthquakes, that may be it would stand another, and I waited a little longer: it really did become less, and finally died away. The shocks lasted several minutes. Afterwards I walked round with my candle to look for cracks. There was only one of any consequence; but that I could put my hand into. However, I did not think it mattered very much, for the beams went the other way, and if the worst came, only the end of the room would fall out: so I went to bed again.

After this I got to work again at the Hospital. I attended regularly at a certain hour in the morning; the patients daily increased so in number, to nearly two hundred a day, that at the end of the week I became feverish with a Hospital throat. This was very annoying, for I had to stop away for a couple of days. I was afraid His Highness would begin to think he had made a bad bargain in engaging a Doctor who was generally ill, or fancied himself so. However, I was soon better, and on the following Sunday went to the Palace to lay a report before the Amîr. His

Highness had asked me to test the purity of the spirit, "Brandy, Whisky, and Old Tom," that was being made in the Kabul Distillery.

I found His Highness downstairs in one of the small rooms of the Erg Palace that open from the Octagonal hall. He was lying on a fur-covered couch heaped with pillows. He looked better than he had done, though he still had some gouty pains in the right knee.

The room was small, but very pretty. There were mirrors let into the wall, which made the room seem larger.

Outside the large wide window opening into the gardens was erected a crimson and white awning. Here were grouped the officials who had to see His Highness on business. I sat inside, near the Amîr's couch, and the air was sweet with scent from the clusters of roses which filled the vases in the room. A few Page boys were there. His Highness described to me the trouble he had had in getting down stairs with his gouty knee ; and he gave me further details as to the treatment he was undergoing for the gout : how that he had been bled and leeched frequently, and that when the pain in his foot was very severe it had been necessary to plunge the foot into iced water !

Tea was brought in : His Highness said that green tea was not good for me in my state of health ; he therefore ordered black tea to be brought, and he made me a present of several pounds.

I then gave my report as to the Spirit. It was made from the fermentation of raisins, and distilled in a proper still ; but the so-called Brandy, Whisky,

and "Old Tom" were simply the raw spirit coloured and flavoured with native drugs: none of it was fit for human consumption, and those who drank it became ill.

Presently, Mr. Pyne was announced. He also gave an opinion concerning the spirit: he said it was not good, but at the same time admitted that it would sell in Peshawur. The Hindustani interpreted for him: I do not know what he said, I could not follow the Persian, but His Highness seemed perplexed. He said that since the opinion of two of his European servants disagreed he would send the spirit to Calcutta to be tested.

The maker of the spirit was a Hindu, who, I understood, had been imported into the country by the Hindustani Interpreter.

I remember that one of the objections the Hindu and the Hindustani made to my report was that I had said "Gin" instead of "Old Tom." They said the spirit was not gin (they were quite right), but that it was "Old Tom!" I let the matter pass: it seemed too absurd to argue on the point. Meanwhile the making of Spirit was to be continued, but that of "Brandy, Whisky, and Old Tom" to be stopped till further information on the subject was obtained.

A few nights after the Durbar I was awakened about midnight by an extraordinary and mysterious noise that seemed to come "whiffling by." It was followed in a few seconds by a shorter and sharper noise which literally made the earth shake. I had never felt an earthquake like that before, and I wondered what was coming next. Dogs were barking, horses neighing, and men shouting. The noise woke

up everybody. We listened and listened, but there was no repetition, and I went to sleep again. The next morning we heard the solution of the mystery. The rocket and firework factory in Kabul had blown up. It was not very far from the workshops, and Pyne told me he thought he should have been thrown out of bed. I enquired as to the loss of life, and heard that some people had been killed, but no one seemed very interested in that line of enquiry. Nor did I ever hear the cause of the explosion accounted for. Doubtless it was "Kismet."

We had an epidemic of "mumps" in Kabul at the time I remember, and the Hindustani Hospital assistant, the gentlemanly dipsomaniac, had it rather badly.

In the beginning of October I received an invitation from Her Highness the Sultana to attend the Reception after the wedding of Prince Nasrullah.

It was quite a fête, and was held in the Babur shah gardens, about a mile and a half out of the town, on the banks of the Kabul river.

The invitation said seven a.m., but I started about half-past nine. The day was bright and sunny, like an August day in England.

I rode, accompanied by the Armenian; and the servants walked in front and by the side of the horses after the manner of the country. I put on all my finery, including the medal His Highness had given me. The garden was gay with many-coloured tents and awnings, and crowded with Orientals in gala costume. The green of the grass and trees; the hazy red and blue of the mountains; the gleam and ripple of the river: all these, with the gay colours, made a beautiful picture.

The Prince had not arrived, and I went to a large tent where the Commander-in-Chief, the Officers, and Chief Secretaries were, and sat and chatted with them till the Prince arrived.

Presently His Highness sent for me. I found him seated under a large awning surrounded by Courtiers, who were standing. There were many others seated cross-legged on the ground in a semicircle in front of him. I stopped outside the circle and bowed with my hat off. A chair was placed exactly in the middle of the circle, opposite to the Prince, and he beckoned me to sit there. I offered my congratulations ; the Prince kindly enquired after my health ; and complimentary speeches were exchanged.

Shortly afterwards the Commander-in-Chief, the Officers, and Secretaries came to salaam His Highness, and I bowed and retired.

I was then conducted to a tent on the bank, which was made ready for me, and tea and cigarettes were brought by order of the Sultana, whose guest I was.

Directly I had arrived at the garden I had sent in my salaams to the Sultana. She with the bride and the attendants of the Harem were in a small walled garden apart. His Highness the Amîr was not present. He was still suffering somewhat from the gouty attack.

By and by Mr. Pyne and the Engineers arrived, and they came to my tent. At noon the Sultana gave orders for lunch to be served to us. It was cooked in the native fashion, and consisted of pilau and the various other native dishes.

After lunch Mr. Pyne and the Engineers went to pay their respects to the Prince and then started for

home again ; but the Sultana sent a request for them to stay longer.

The Armenian enquired if we should like some music, and he sent for a band of pipers. They marched with their bagpipes up and down in front of the tent playing Scotch and Afghan tunes. There were several other bands about the garden—brass bands and native string bands—playing military and native music. There were dancing boys, conjurors, and nautch girls.

The chief men lunched in tents and the crowds of people had a picnic on the grass ; pilau and bread being provided for them.

About two the Sultana sent a huge tray of sweetmeats, with which we regaled ourselves. At half-past two the fête was over and we came away. The roads were lined with troops, for the Sultana, the ladies, and the Princes had not yet left.

For a few days before and after the wedding volleys of musketry were fired at intervals, and bands were playing nearly all day.

I heard a story at the time about the Prince and his Bride which is interesting. When the Prince was very small he was very fond of a particular girl in the Harem—a gentlewoman—and he said that when he was old enough he would make her his wife. The girl was considerably older than he was, and it is said that in the course of years the Prince's views changed. His Highness the Amîr, however, decided that since he was a Prince, and had passed his word, he should certainly keep it. In due time the word was kept. This was the wedding.

At the Hospital the work was getting rather over-

whelming. I was not strong yet, but if I appeared at the Hospital at all I had to see everyone. At the hundred and twentieth or thirtieth patient the back-ache came on horribly. If I did not go the patients crowded round the door of the Hospital and said, "When is the Doctor coming? ask him to come for God's sake." What could I do? I was obliged to go. If I had been strong I should have enjoyed it, but the overwork delayed my recovery, and I became much depressed. I thought of resigning and coming away, but I knew His Highness was not yet well, and in addition he had just then the annoyance of finding evidence of intrigue and swindling among some of the higher Officials: heavy fines were imposed, and there were extensive alterations in the higher appointments. I did not want to add to his annoyances by resigning; but to my last day I shall never forget the weary drag of that and the immediately succeeding time.

On Friday, the Sabbath, I went for a ride with the Armenian. We rode east from Kabul past the Bala Hissar, where Cavagnari was, and round the huge marsh or lake that lies in the middle of the Kabul Valley. All around were the mountains, and between them and the lake were fields of clover, stubble where corn had been, gardens, trees, and fortified country houses. The lake is in some parts very deep and in others shallow. Here the rushes grow thick, making a cover for huge numbers of wild duck that flock to Kabul in the autumn and winter. A great deal of the land about the marsh belongs to His Highness's sister. We passed her country house—a fort. We saw also the tomb where the Amîr's father is buried. At the extreme east of the lake, near the village of Bîni

Hissar, the road took us a little up the foot of the mountain. I pulled up a few minutes to admire the view.

In the foreground, on the margin of the lake, was one tree coloured golden yellow by the autumn: near it were others still green. Beyond were brown rushes and the lake. Further, on the opposite bank, the trees, massed together, were tinted all shades of green, brown, and yellow. Then rose up the hazy purple mountains, range beyond range, dim and shadowy in the distance, and above, the blue of the sky flecked here and there by little white clouds.

I was charmed—but I could not rouse any enthusiasm in the Armenian. Like most Orientals, he looked upon an afternoon ride as an unnecessary and laborious nuisance; still he would not consent to my going alone.

In the autumn and winter the Amîr and the Princes ride duck shooting through the shallow parts of the marsh.

One day, some two or three years after the time of which I am writing, I was riding in this direction with Mr. Collins, the geologist, when, just as we rounded the corner of the Peshawur Road, which leads off directly opposite the Bala Hissar, we heard the rattle of kettledrums. We pulled up, knowing that the Amîr must be at hand. Presently, there came in sight right opposite the Bala Hissar the Amîr's mounted guard of Barakzais. Then came the drummers, who rode just in front of His Highness. We dismounted as the Amîr approached. He was seated in his palanquin, and the bearers scuffled along rapidly, leaning on the pole. His

Highness carries a walking-stick when he rides in the palanquin, and if the pace is not speedy enough, the nearest bearer receives a reminder in the shape of a prod in the back. His Highness, when he saw us, halted the cavalcade and enquired if we were well. He told us he had been duck shooting on the Bala Hissar marsh.

It was a pretty sight. The young Page boys in their gold-embroidered uniforms scampered about on their horses. The guard rode steadily, and the servants, with their turbans and many-coloured garments—one with the chillim, another with a charcoal brazier, a third with a samovar for tea, a fourth with the Amîr's chair, and so on—these followed in great numbers. Altogether, with the background of the Bala Hissar, it made a striking sight.

At the end of October, the Chief, whose brother was at the Court of the Amîr as hostage, came to Kabul to salaam His Highness. The brother, whom I knew in Turkestan, called one morning upon me to say that the Chief, who had wished to come and see me, was ill with fever ; would I visit and prescribe for him. Accordingly, I accompanied my friend to the house the Chief had taken in Kabul. A large following of dependants and servants had arrived with him. They treated me with great respect, and I was shown in an upper-room, where the Chief lay ill with fever. He was a broad-shouldered stout man, about five feet seven inches in height, and I should say about thirty-five years old. He was not alone : the room was nearly full of people ; I think an Afghan hates nothing more than his own company : he is bored in no time.

The province belonging to the Chief has a very hot climate. It lies in the south-east. In Kabul, at this time, though the sun was still hot, there was a cutting wind blowing, and the Chief and his people did not wrap themselves up as they should have done.

Tea, cigars, and sweets were brought, and after examining the Chief's condition, I sat and talked to him and his brother for some time. He was an intelligent man. One of his favourite amusements was photography ; he dabbled, too, in chemistry, and showed me a scar in his hand, where he had been injured by an explosion when he was learning something about the science. Afterwards, I examined some of his retinue ; eight of them were ill with the fever.

This Chief was beloved, or admired—or whatever the corresponding sentiment is in an Afghan's bosom —by his Clansmen. But in the eyes of His Highness he was as a poppy grown very tall. It was necessary that something be done lest he should overtop all other flowers. He had, I heard, been receiving a subsidy of a lac of rupees a year from the Afghan Government. This was altered : and while he was in Kabul, a new "Governor" was sent to take command in his province. This was not pleasing to the Clansmen : they did not love—or whatever the sentiment is—the Governor as they did the Chief, for he was a stranger. They, therefore, slew him. Another was sent ; him they also slew, and the Chief was by and by allowed to return to his Province, though without the subsidy.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE AMIR'S ILLNESS

Sent for to the Palace. The Amir's health: the Liniment. Questions in chemistry. Early breakfast at the Palace. A courtier as a waiter. Called to Prince Aziz Ullah: his illness. Illness of the Deputy Commander-in-Chief. Illness of the Amîr's cousin. A visit to Prince Mahomed Omer. The Queen's brougham: her reverend uncle. The reception. Lunch. The present. The Jelalabad official and his promise. Dinner with Mr. Pyne. Death of Prince Aziz Ullah. The Chief ill again. The weather. The silence at the Palace. December 2nd: the Call. The town at night. Illness of the Amîr. His request: his bodily condition: former treatment. The Amîr's prayer. Medical treatment. The next morning. Bulletins. Called to the Sultana. The Harem. The Sultana's illness: her condition. A poisonous dose. Improvement of Amîr: and of Sultana. The innocent plot: betrayal. A present. Musicians. Amîr and Sultana as patients. Annoyances by an interpreter. A Shock. The Sultana's letter: the answer. News from Malek, the Page. Comments. The Amîr's rebuke. In the Harem: the Armenian's comments. Quarters in the Prince's quadrangle. The Amîr's relapse.

In the early part of November I was sent for to the Erg Palace. When I arrived, His Highness was sitting on a couch or divan covered with a cloth of dull crimson velvet and gold. He was dressed in a robe of green velvet and gold with a white turban. The couch was in the small room that opens on one side into the Octagonal hall, and on the other into the gardens. His Highness said that he still had some pain in the knee and foot, and he would be glad if I would send him a liniment that would take away the pain and enable him to ride.

Afterwards he asked my opinion with regard to

the action of certain acids of native production, and we tried some experiments upon copper and brass. His Highness wanted an acid that could be procured cheaply, for the purpose of cleaning copper cartridge cases.

The next day I went to the Palace again, taking with me a liniment. Presently Malek, the favourite Page, came out, and seeing me waiting in the gardens among the Secretaries, came up and asked if he should take the medicine in and say I had arrived. He soon came out again, and I was called in with the Armenian. We sat in one of the small rooms or alcoves, waiting. His Highness was not visible when I went in. He was in the room he had occupied the day before, but it was curtained off from the Octagonal hall. Two or three of the Page boys came up and asked when I was going to London. I began to think my "Leave of absence" had been mentioned by the Amîr. Just then His Highness appeared; he was fully dressed, and walked with the aid of a stick. We all rose and bowed. A table and chair were placed for him in the room where we were. He spoke to me about his health, and asked me the properties of the liniment, saying it had a pleasant smell.

Presently the "early breakfast" was brought for the Amîr on a silver tray. It consisted of tea, which he drank out of a glass mug set in silver, hot milk, and some cakes and macaroons. A table and tea were brought for me, and I sat opposite to him. The others sat on the ground, and tea was carried round to them by the servants. His Highness did not eat anything, and he told one of the Courtiers, Naim Khan, to bring the tray to me. I do not know if

Naim liked being a waiter for once in a way, but he obeyed at once. However, he was a good fellow, about twenty-six, and was always a friend of mine, so I do not think he minded very much. He was very smart, with a pale blue—almost grey—brocaded silk postîn and a beaver busby. The Amîr asked me to visit the Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Perwana Khan, who was ill.

I returned to the Hospital, but in the afternoon was sent for again by His Highness. He asked me to examine and prescribe for his infant son, Prince Aziz Ullah, who, the Hakims informed him, was suffering from disease of the ear. I went off to the Harem Serai at once, and presently the child was brought out into the waiting-room. He was carried in the arms of an old man. The child was about two years old, and was the son of one of the minor ladies of the Harem. He was a pretty little fellow, with large dark eyes and a fair skin. I looked at him as he was being brought out, and saw a dusky livid appearance about the lips; and that the nostrils worked at each breath.

"A bad ear!" I thought. "If that is not lungs, I am an Afghan!"

I put my ear on his back, and the bubbling and crackling of the air as it was sucked through the inflamed bronchial tubes was loud enough for even a Hakim to hear. I asked how long he had been like that. Twenty days! He was suffering from broncho-pneumonia following measles. The ear was a trivial matter.

Perwana Khan was suffering, the Hakim said, from colic. I found he had a stone in the kidney.

The same day I received a letter from Prince Habibullah asking me to attend Sirdar Ressùl Khan, the Amîr's cousin, son of Sirdar Usuf, who is the son of Amîr Dôst Mahomed. Sirdar Ressùl had a crippled arm : he had injured it some time before while out duck shooting.

I was told that the liniment relieved the Amîr's pain at once ; but I do not know—it may have been merely Oriental politeness that led them to say so. I did not see His Highness for some days, as he was the guest of the Dabier-ul-Mulk.

A day or two afterwards, as I had not seen the little Prince, Mahomed Omer, since my illness, I wrote to the Sultana for permission to visit him.

He was living with the Sultana, at a place about ten miles out of Kabul : the country house of one of the Chief Secretaries, Mir Ahmad Shah, having been placed at Her Highness's service.

The Sultana was kind enough to send her brougham and pair for me. The roads were very good, and I felt very important riding rapidly along in the Queen's carriage.

We reached the Prince's quarters. He had a separate establishment from the Sultana, and I was conducted to a crimson and blue tent. Tea, cigars, and sweets were brought while my salaams were carried to the Prince and word was taken to the Sultana that I had arrived. After staying there about an hour, we got into the carriage again and drove about half a mile further on to the Fort, where the Sultana was living. Here I was received in a large many-coloured silk tent by the Sultana's uncle (on her father's side). This gentleman is a Seyid and

Priest, and is addressed by the title of "Pir" or Reverend.

My chair was placed at the end of the tent, by the side of that of the Reverend gentleman, on a cloth of gold. The others, including the Armenian, sat on the ground along the sides of the tent, some distance from us. I perceived that the Sultana did things in style. Many polite speeches were made, and kind messages brought from Her Highness. Trays of sweetmeats then appeared, native ones—and delicious. I went for them vigorously, for since my illness I had an intense craving for sweets, butter, and all fattening things. Cigars and tea followed, and, after an interval, fruit. There were apples, pears, grapes, quinces, melons, and other fruit. Then came lunch, an elaborate one, in the native style, and uncommonly good I thought it. More cigars, fruit, and conversation followed.

I did not see the little Prince after all, because the weather was considered too cold to bring him out.

I then asked permission to retire, but before I went Her Highness presented me with a beautiful little Kataghani horse, which, I was informed, she had chosen herself.

We entered the carriage again and drove back to Kabul, arriving home at five p.m.

I then went to the Harem Serai to see little Prince Aziz Ullah, but the chance of his recovery was small.

Then I saw an old gentleman, named Saîf Ullah Khan, one of the high officials of Jelalabad, who was on a visit to Kabul. He had fever. He was a very gentlemanly old man, and asked if he could do anything

for me in Jelalabad. I said he could send me some honey if he wished; for a delicious honey is obtained from a village near Jelalabad. He promised; but did not send it.

I dined with Mr. Pyne soon after this, and an excellent dinner he gave me. He had brought a large stock of tinned provisions from India during his last trip. Pastry, asparagus, green peas, cheese, cocoa, and Swiss milk were novelties to me. He was lucky enough to get away every cold season, and generally journeyed to England for more machinery.

It had been thought that little Prince Aziz Ullah was becoming somewhat better, but in spite of colour in the cheeks he had the greyness about the nostrils that is so ominous of evil in a child, and I sent word to his mother that his life was in great danger. He died the next morning; five days after my first visit.

The Chief with fever became well, but he would not take advice and wrap himself up. Either from that or some other cause he developed acute intestinal catarrh; and the Amîr sent word to me to visit him. He became well eventually, and went back to his province.

Just at this time—the end of November—the weather was most disagreeable. There were heavy clouds and constant rain. This is bad enough in England, but in Kabul it is abominable. The rain made havoc with the roads and houses. Very few of the roads were in any sense "macadamised," and one splashed and slipped along through quagmires and pools. The houses, especially of the poorer people, slightly built of mud with wooden supports, were, some of them, literally washed down.

I went about my daily work in Kabul, seeing patients, performing surgical operations where necessary ; and in the evenings I smoked and read my old books over and over again, little knowing that the Amîr had had a severe return of gout, and was lying dangerously ill at the Palace. News leaks out in time, chiefly by means of the Page boys, but it is little outsiders know at first of what is going on in the Palace.

On December 2nd, at nine p.m., just as I had turned in, there came a hammering at the gates. Presently one of the soldiers of the guard came hurrying to my room and said, in Persian,

" Rise ! Amîr Sahib calls you."

I pulled on my boots, threw on a postîn, and in a very few seconds was in the porch. Quick as I had been, I found my horse saddled and bridled. I rode rapidly along the dark deserted streets, slippery with wet, the puddles glistening in the light of an occasional lamp ; a soldier was in front and a soldier behind me. Then I heard the clatter and splash of other horses, and looking back saw the Armenian advancing rapidly, accompanied by the soldier who had called him. This was somewhat of a relief to me, for I did not know the soldiers, and the Armenian was always a protection. I guessed now that the Amîr was ill, and that the time had arrived when he wished to undergo European medical treatment. Presently we arrived at the Erg Palace, and, leaving our horses at the gate, were at once admitted by the sentry. We hurried across the gardens to the Amîr's Pavilion. Entering at once, we passed through the Octagonal Hall, and in the small room opposite the entry I saw

the Amîr lying back on the pillows of his couch. He was rolling his head from side to side and groaning in great pain. Malek, the Page, was kneeling on the couch rubbing His Highness's knee. The two eldest sons, the Princes Habibullah and Nasrullah, were in the room with the Amîr, as were Perwana Khan, Jan Mahomed Khan, the Dabier-ul-Mulk, Mir Ahmad Shah—in fact, most of the principal officers of the Kingdom who were in Kabul at the time. These were kneeling around the room. Every one had a look of strained and anxious attention.

It was obvious that the Amîr was very ill, and I said in English to the Armenian,

"Inquire if His Highness wishes to place himself under my medical care."

His Highness, turning his head and looking at me, said, "Bâli! I wish it."

I laid down my turban, removed the spurs from my boots, and set to work to examine His Highness's condition.

He had acute gouty inflammation of the right shoulder, elbow, wrist and knee, and shooting neuralgic pains in the left calf. There was coarse crepitation of the left axillary base, with cough; some enlargement of the heart; extreme vesical irritability, and faucial congestion; and albuminuria to the extent roughly of a fifth. His temperature was 102 degrees Fahr.: the pulse weak; and I was informed that he had had no sleep for several nights.

I sat down a minute to consider what I would do. The condition was serious: for the Amîr had been ill, on and off, to my knowledge, since September the 9th, and possibly longer. The medical treatment to which

he had been subjected by the Hakims for his complaint was, to my mind, unscientific, and even dangerous. He had been bled, I was informed, nearly to faintness, and leeched freely several times : he had been purged violently and often : and his gouty foot had been plunged into iced water. What else was done I do not know : but this was enough.

A lantern being procured, I went at once to the Hospital, which is at the edge of the Palace gardens, and obtained such medicines as I needed. I was accompanied by the Hindustani Priest-doctor, who was accused of murdering his Superior Officer in India, and who, as I have mentioned, was not under my orders. We returned to the Palace, and the medicines were placed in charge of a trusted Page.

I weighed and measured the medicines in suitable doses, and when they were dissolved I handed the glass to His Highness. It did not enter my head to taste a dose of the medicine in front of His Highness, nor did he ever require me to do so. His Highness took the glass, and, murmuring,

"In the name of God—the merciful and compassionate," he drank the contents.

I fomented the inflamed joints with hot water, applying suitable medicines, and finally bandaged them gently in cotton-wool and tissue. I then requested as many as I could ask, to withdraw, in the hope that His Highness might sleep ; and I went into an adjoining room. I did not give His Highness any opiate or other sleeping draught, wishing rather to trust to the effect of the medicines I had given him. I ought to say that His Highness, with a courtesy that never leaves him, gave orders for

meals and suitable accomodation for sleeping to be prepared for me in the adjoining room or alcove. In half-an-hour His Highness slept. The Princes left very quietly about two hours afterwards.

I need not say that, though a couch, covered with silk and gold embroidery, had been prepared for me, I did not lie down. I had supper, which was brought silently by the chief cook: and then, at intervals during the night, stole in to look at the Royal patient. Exhausted by suffering and want of rest, and relieved by the action of the medicines, he slept soundly for three or four hours.

In the early morning His Highness woke: he expressed himself as nearly free from pain, and was most grateful to me. I administered the medicines, again applied the fomentations and regulated His Highness's diet.

Every one made much of me, from Prince to Page boy. Daily I was required to send a written report of the Amîr's condition to Her Highness, the Sultana, and to Prince Habibullah.

The next day, I was called to the Harem Serai, for the Sultana was very ill. The Amîr directed me to attend Her Highness.

I, therefore, left the Amîr's Pavilion and, by His Highness's order, was accompanied by the Priest-doctor, to the Harem Serai. The great gates were opened by an old white-bearded man, and we were admitted into a covered portico. The old man left us a moment, and on returning, he ushered us into a large paved quadrangle surrounded by high white buildings. No one was to be seen. We crossed

the silent quadrangle, and passing up some steps entered a building on the north side.

An open door led from the lobby at the top of the steps into a long corridor, curtained and carpeted, but otherwise empty. At the end was a door, to enter which we ascended three steps. We now found ourselves in a large room at right angles to the corridor, and lighted by a window at the end. Towards the other end of the room a thin crimson silk curtain was stretched entirely across. The room was furnished very like an English drawing-room. A carpet was on the floor, curtains by the windows, pictures on the wall, and several tables by the side of the wall, on which were vases, candelabra, and china ornaments. In nearly the centre of the room there was standing on the floor a large and very ornamental glass candelabrum, about six feet high. There were three or four little Page boys in the room, about nine or ten years of age.

As we entered, a voice from behind the curtain pronounced the usual Persian salutation of welcome. It was the Sultana speaking. She had a deep, musical voice. I bowed and advanced. A chair was placed for me near the curtain, and tea and cigarettes were brought. After I had tasted the tea, Her Highness requested me to smoke. Accordingly, I lit a cigarette, and I heard from behind the curtain the bubble of the chillim. The Sultana then commenced describing her symptoms, but the Hindustani Priest-doctor had an imperfect knowledge of English, and he asked that an Interpreter might be sent for. A messenger was at once sent for the Armenian, who presently entered saying, with

a bow, "Salaam, Aleikoum." He took his stand near me.

The Sultana raised the curtain sufficiently to pass her hand underneath, and I examined the pulse. It was rapid (133) and weak. I perceived that she was lying on a couch—and that the hand was white, and was that of a young woman. I described the use of the clinical thermometer, and handed it to her. When she returned it to me the indicator marked a temperature of 105 degrees Fahr.

She complained of cough, and with some little difficulty I managed, by asking her to stand, to listen to the sounds of the chest through the curtain, using a straight wooden stethoscope. Not knowing the height of Her Highness, I nearly struck her in the face in endeavouring to find the position of the chest, and she cried out: however, she laughed when she heard of my difficulty.

She had bronchial catarrh: there were no morbid cardiac sounds, and she had Malarial fever. I inquired as to the history of the illness and the habits of the patient, and heard that she was accustomed to inhale tobacco-smoke from the chillim pretty much all day: and that in order to procure sleep she was accustomed to take sixty grains of chloral nightly!

I advised the cessation of smoking for a time, and the Sultana laughed.

After about an hour, I asked permission to retire. I prescribed quinine and a cough mixture: but in the evening, to my horror, I was called upon to weigh out the usual dose of chloral, tie down the cork of the bottle, and seal it with my own seal. Sleep!

of course I did not sleep. If a lie had been told me about the dose, the Sultana would be found dead in the morning.

Meanwhile the Amîr was distinctly better that day, though of course he was still very ill. The temperature was normal: the vesical irritability had disappeared: there was no difficulty in swallowing; and the pain in the joints was less.

The next morning the Sultana was somewhat better. The relief to my mind cannot be described: I will not attempt it. In my visit to the Sultana that day I again urged upon her the advisability, if she wished to get rid of her cough, of ceasing to smoke,—at any rate for a time. She would not listen.

I explained to the Amîr my difficulty with Her Highness, and he arranged a plan in which she could be beguiled into smoking less. I weighed out a little less chloral that evening.

I visited the Amîr every two or three hours during the day, examining his condition. He still had some pain, though vastly less than he had had, and the cough was better.

At two in the morning I was sent for by the Sultana. She detailed to me the whole of the innocent plot that had been arranged to draw her from the chillim, and laughed at me for thinking she could be so easily beguiled.

I concluded there were certain in the Amîr's court who brought minute details of what occurred there to the Harem Serai.

The Sultana did not seem angry, for she ordered to be brought for me a present of Cashmere shawls, embroidery, and furs.

The Amîr that day had some burning pain in the hand and foot, but it yielded to treatment, and he was quite bright in the evening, laughing heartily several times. Musicians and dancing girls were sent for and many of the chief Officials visited the Palace. His Highness did not sleep well that night.

The next day—the fifth of my attendance—the Amîr felt better, there was very little pain, and the cough was less. He could not sleep, however ; and in the afternoon there was a return of pain in the knee.

Meanwhile I was nearly worn out with want of sleep and anxiety. The Amîr was a good patient, considering that he was an Oriental King. He would take what medicine and food I advised : but I could not regulate such matters as the number of visitors he should receive, nor even such a thing as the admission of musicians.

The Sultana, on the other hand, was anything but a good patient. She would not do as I advised, and she wished me to give her just what medicines she thought best.

Added to all this, I was greatly embarrassed and annoyed by the Hindustani Interpreter, whom I did not trust. He was always at the Court ; and he constantly interrupted the Armenian before the Amîr, and corrected him when there was no need. I told him to "Chûp!"—"shut up"—once or twice, but it was not enough, and the fifth night I called him into my room, and in a low voice told him—I admit, harshly—that I did not need either his corrections or interference : that the Armenian was my Interpreter ; and that he could hold his tongue till he was called upon to speak.

That night His Highness was restless, and in the morning (Sunday) to my amazement he said he would take no more European medicine! I was aghast! He was much better. What had displeased him? But I was worn out, and I went to my room and lay on the bed in my clothes—I had never taken them off—and went sound asleep.

By-and-by I was aroused; the Sultana had sent for me as soon as she had awakened from the sleeping-draught.

The Armenian told her that His Highness had ceased taking European medicine. She was astonished and alarmed, and at once wrote a letter to the Amîr. She asked him what it all meant—she read the letter to me—asked whether he were a King or a boy. At one time he said the English Doctor was all that was wise and learned, and the next he ceased taking his medicine: was he going back to the Hakims who had killed his father and his father's father? Why was this?

The answer from the Amîr arrived: the Sultana read it to me.

His Highness said he was a King and no boy; but he added that there was quarrelling between two Interpreters and he feared there would be a mis-translation and that he should suffer. For this reason he considered it better that he should cease taking European medicine for the present. He was not angry with the English Doctor: on the contrary, he realized the benefit he had received from his treatment, and would resume his medicine when the suitable time arrived.

That night Malek, the Page, came to me. He

said that the Hindustani had crept to the Amîr in the morning, and had whispered this story: He had implored me to give *good* medicine to the Amîr: and that at once I had wished to kick and strike him; that I was giving His Highness alcohol in all his medicines, and it was this that lulled the pain, though it would afterwards make him worse: that he had heard me say I had only this one medicine that could affect His Highness.

I could not find it in my heart to blame the Amîr. Wearied out with months of suffering, he lacked the keen judgment that is his characteristic. Nevertheless, in a matter of such vast importance, the fact, that *any* condition could place one at the mercy of an obscure intriguing Hindustani, gave such a shock to my confidence that I never entirely recovered it while I was in the service of the Amîr. Once in a lifetime was enough for such an experience as I had been through; for had the illness of either Amîr or Sultana terminated fatally, while they were under my care, *my* fate would have been sufficiently appalling.

I was to visit His Highness daily, although he was under the care of the Hakims. His manner to me was never so kind as now. I examined his condition as before, and he described to me the treatment the Hakims were subjecting him to.

They had no specific medicine, but administered drugs that produced frequent and copious alvine evacuations. I said one day—in my anxiety—that I feared they were, in His Highness's feeble condition, overdoing this line of treatment. His Highness rebuked me and said,

"When I am under the care of Hakims, I do as Hakims say; when under your care, as you say."

I continued attending the Sultana. She was much better and was very kind. She read poetry to me, and commenced teaching me to talk Persian. One day she said in Persian,

"Say this ——" and she repeated some sentence.

In my weariness, for it was in the middle of the night, I mechanically repeated after her, "Say this ——" and I gave the sentence. At once the Page boys and the girls behind the curtains burst out laughing.

As we came away I said to the Armenian, "Why were you so sulky to-night?"

He had sat very glum in the Harem Serai. He said—

"Sir, you European, and, perhaps, no harm come for you—but for *me*, Amîr Sahib blow me from gun if Her Highness laugh while I there."

I was considerably taken aback.

Meanwhile, I was working down the chloral: I had got fifteen grains less; but I couldn't stop the chillim.

There was no longer any necessity for me to live in His Highness's Pavilion, and he gave orders for quarters to be prepared for me in the Prince's quadrangle near by, so that I could be on the spot in case of necessity.

The room was curtained and carpeted, and wood for the fire provided. My servants came to wait upon me. An arm-chair of His Highness's was sent, a table, and candelabra. My friend, Shere Ali, came to see me frequently; and the Page boys at all hours. I

visited the Amîr twice a day. Sometimes he invited me to sit on the very couch he was lying on, and he told me many interesting stories of his adventures in Russia.

For a few days His Highness continued about the same. The albumen had nearly cleared away (sp. gr. 1012), though crystals of lithic acid were deposited, and occasional tube casts could be seen.

A day or two afterwards, His Highness had a return of pain, and when I went to see him he said that he felt weaker, and admitted that the Hakims had overdone the form of treatment I spoke of.

The next day he was worse: the pains were more severe; he had not slept, and he told me he had had shivering and fever in the night.

The day after, the albumenuria returned, to the extent, roughly, of a twelfth in the morning, and later in the day a fifth (sp. gr. 1016). The left ankle commenced swelling at five p.m., the pulse was 100 and weak; Tr. 97·2.

Out of doors it was very cold. The snow had commenced, and it was freezing hard.

CHAPTER XXIV

ROYAL PATIENTS

Cogitations concerning the Hindustani Interpreter : colloid and crystalloid : the Armenian's comments. Cogitations concerning the position : the engineers' comments. The Amîr as a host : the Sultana as a hostess. The Amîr's photograph. The Sultana's name. Sirdar, the girl-boy. The sleeping draught. The tea cup and the thermometer. The release from a dangerous position. The Christmas dinner : the guests : the festive board : the menu : the wine : music. The Amîr's fainting attack : the remedy : effect on the physician : the substituted remedy : further effect on the physician : the Amîr's prescription. The Amîr's alarming nervous symptoms. Hospital cases. Duties of the Princes Habibullah and Nasrullah.

I THOUGHT of the Hindustani, and gnashed upon him : for the Hakims had done much evil already, and I thought they would surely complete their work.

"He has allowed his petty spite to place the life of the Amîr in danger," thought I ; "to say nothing of my life and that of the two Europeans here."

Mr. Pyne had fortunately been able at this time to obtain leave, and had departed for India with an order for more machinery.

The idea occurred to me in a colloidal form that perhaps I ought to destroy this Hindustani gnat. I say "colloidal," for I doubt if the idea would ever have crystallised into action. When one has been long trained in the art of saving life, killing does not come readily. I fancy, however, I must have expressed the idea aloud, for the Armenian said :—

"Sir, you not kill it. You big man, he very small man. Your wish, you can shoot Commander-in-Chief or Dabier-ul-Mulk; you not kill two pice Hindustani—dog's son. Other small man catch it and kill it for you."

The employment of assassins, however, did not appeal to my imagination as a suitable line of action, and I determined to await the course of events.

For some little time afterwards, if I heard much commotion or bustle outside, I said to myself,

"The hour has come. The Amîr has joined his fathers; now for the last fight."

Then, again, I thought this over. What was the good of fighting? Granted that my revolver gave me six lives—why should I take six lives? It would not save my own. And, query again: Was my life worth six others? I rode to the workshops and discussed the matter with the engineers, Stewart and Myddleton. They were good fellows; but they did not agree with me. They said they should make a fight for it; that they were worth a good deal more than six Afghans. Anyway, they did not mean to sit down and wait for their throats to be cut like a couple of bullocks.

This *did* rather appeal to my imagination. There was the fierce excitement and delight of battling for one's life, in place of the sickening emotion of waiting to be murdered. I determined, therefore, to waive the point as to whether my life were worth six others, and discuss it afterwards if we escaped, which, by the way, I did not think very likely. I did not so much mind the idea of a bullet through the brain or heart—it would be a momentary emotion; but a bayonet stab—it does not kill at once; and a cut throat I always had a horror of: I have seen so many.

Every night a dinner in European style was brought me, and one day His Highness asked me if I liked fruit. Forthwith, two large trays were brought every night: one of fresh fruit—sweet lemons, grapes, pomegranates, and apples ; and one of dried fruits and nuts, far more than any one person could eat ; and my servants had the benefit.

I continued attending the Sultana. She showed me her crowns : they were heavy, of beaten gold, worked in intricate designs, and lined with velvet. One had ostrich plumes on it, another had common artificial flowers tucked in round the top. I suggested that flowers were unsuitable on a crown, and Her Highness tore them out. She showed me her hats and bonnets, handing them to me under the curtain. Most of them were English, of an old-fashioned shape. I said they were scarcely fit for a Queen, but she said that the Amîr liked to see her wear them. One was a fur cap—seal, I think—trimmed with a sable tail. It was very pretty, but artificial flowers had been added. I said that flowers grew in the summer and fur was worn in the winter, perhaps it would look better without the flowers. Her Highness removed them at once. She showed me a photograph album : it contained a few photographs : among them was a copy of a painting of Queen Catherine of Russia. It was a very beautiful face, and the Sultana spoke in admiration of the Queen.

Her Highness asked me to choose a photograph and she would give it me. I had noticed hanging on the wall of the room a photograph, framed in wood, of His Highness the Amîr. I said that as I

had none of my Royal Master I should like that one, if Her Highness could spare it. At once it was taken down by one of the Page boys and handed to me.

The Sultana asked me if I knew the names of the Princes, the sons of the Amîr. When I had repeated them she asked me if I knew her own name. I had imagined it was not correct for anyone, not of the family, to know a lady's name. I therefore told Her Highness that, before me, she was spoken of as "the Illustrious Lady." She, however, told me at once that her name was Halima, so that my prevarication was unnecessary.

She showed me a star and a sword His Highness the Amîr had given her. The Amîr was away fighting, and a rebellion arose in Kabul; the young Sultana at once issued from the Harem, veiled, took command of the troops in Kabul, and quelled the rebellion.

The messenger Her Highness sent when she called me was apparently a lad of fifteen or sixteen, called Sirdar. I was informed that it was not a boy but a girl. She was dressed in trousers, tunic, and turban, and considered herself, as indeed did other people, a man. It seemed a little odd to me at first when she came to my room in the middle of the night to call me to attend the Sultana, and coolly sat on the couch while I dressed. I gave her a pair of braces. She had to be on duty night and day, and was worn-looking from insufficient sleep, and she threatened to box my ears if I did not increase the dose of chloral I was giving the Sultana: I had worked it down to forty grains.

I told her I was afraid to increase the dose as the medicine was a deadly poison, and that its prolonged

use in large doses was productive of considerable harm.

The Sultana, not knowing the danger of the medicine, had learnt the habit from the Hindustani medical attendant, who was my predecessor. This man had managed, when he had acquired considerable wealth, to escape from the country. The Amîr told me he was an utter scoundrel :—which is possible.

The Sultana usually sent for me as soon as she woke, about one or two o'clock in the early morning, for the chloral apparently did not procure her more than four or five hours' sleep.

One night, after having as usual handed her the clinical thermometer, I found, to my horror, that the indicator marked a temperature of over 106 degrees Fahr. !

I at once asked Her Highness to allow me to examine the pulse. She passed her hand under the curtain. It was cool, and the pulse was steady—seventy beats a minute. There could be no fever with that pulse. I looked at the Armenian, and he pointed silently to the tea cup by my side. I heard some smothered laughter behind the curtain, and the truth flashed upon me. The thermometer had been dipped for a moment in the hot tea—hence 106 degrees Fahr.

Concerning the sleeping draught, Her Highness the Sultana never spoke to me, but Sirdar, her messenger, urged upon me frequently the necessity of increasing the dose, saying that Her Highness could not sleep, and was becoming angry with me. I refused to increase the dose of chloral, and endeavoured to substitute other soporifics.

The result was, that after about a fortnight Her

Highness refused European medical treatment. So far from worrying me, this was an absolute relief to my mind; for the position was not without its dangers.

A week after this came Christmas day. I gave instructions to the Chief Cook, and then invited Messrs. Stewart and Myddleton to dine with me in my rooms at the Palace.

It was a clear sunny day; bitterly cold, with a hard frost. My guests arrived on horseback about six p.m., their servants bringing knives, forks, and plates, cigars, and a bottle of whisky. I hadn't such a thing as whisky, but I produced with great pride a quart bottle of champagne that I had found in the medical stores, and which I had the Amîr's permission to use.

We sat down to dinner. My brass candelabra, each with three candles, lit up the festive board: a wood fire blazing on the hearth threw a warm glow over the room: the white walls cast back the light; and the cosy room, with crimson curtains drawn over door and windows, made us almost forget Afghanistan, and we lost, if only for a time, the feeling of insecurity in which we were living.

We had soup, tinned salmon, partridges, roast mutton, anchovy toast, plum pudding all blazing, and fruit. Then came the champagne. With subdued but proud excitement we cut the wire and waited for the cork to pop—it did not pop. We eased it a little with our thumb, and waited. We patted the bottle gently; then shook it—and still waited. The Armenian, standing by, smiled.

"You might bring a corkscrew," I said, carelessly; "the cork is evidently hard."

He produced a corkscrew with suspicious readiness, and I proceeded to carefully insert it. Oh, yes, the cork came out easily enough. It was not the fault of the cork, But the champagne!—Did you ever taste champagne that hadn't any fizz in it? It is beastly.

"What's wrong with it?" I asked the Armenian, when he had tasted it.

"No-thing, Sir!" he said. "He in Hospital 'leven years, all his strength gone away."

We "passed" the champagne; whisky was good enough for us.

I told the Armenian that it was only blue-blooded Dukes like himself who could drink flat champagne.

"Sir, he is not flat; very good sherbet he is; I like him."

But after he had been to England he wouldn't drink champagne that had been eleven years in the Hospital.

After dinner Myddleton sang with great taste, and in a sweet tenor voice, some old English ballads —"The Thorn," "The Anchor's Weighed," and a Christmas carol; Stewart occasionally putting in a seconds. I enjoyed it immensely: it was such a treat to hear music again. I did not sing myself, for some of my servants were Afghans and they were in the room: I should have lowered myself in their eyes if I had sung: my guests, however, were indifferent to the opinion of the Afghans.

About midnight they departed, and rode back, escorted by a couple of soldiers, to their rooms at the workshops.

Two days after this His Highness had a fainting

attack; at least he described it as such to me. He said he had been so ill that it had been necessary to give him wine to restore his senses. He desired me to examine the wine and ascertain if it were a suitable stimulant for him. A bottle was handed to me and I poured some out into a wine-glass. It was a clear amber-coloured liquid—may be Chablis, I thought. I was about to drink it, when His Highness said,

"Khubar dar!"—"Take care, it is strong;" and he suggested my adding some sherbet.

"Chablis and sherbet!" I thought; "No, I am not a Mahomedan," and I smiled and tossed it off.

Sword of Damocles! It was liquid fire! I swallowed and swallowed and blinked and gasped.

As expressing a rapid succession of complicated emotions my face must have been a study, for the Amîr leant back on his pillows and roared with laughter. As soon as I could get my breath I coughed out that it was a very bad wine and not at all suitable for His Highness. It was Vodki, I believe, or a Russian spirit of some sort—neat.

I went on to say that for the complaint His Highness was suffering from, every kind of wine was more or less harmful; but that, if faintness rendered it necessary, the best he could drink would be good old whisky. I knew that Pyne had brought a supply to Kabul, and when he went away on leave, he had let Stewart and Myddleton have the residue. I therefore rode off to the shops to beg a bottle. When I returned to the Palace, I placed it before His

Highness, and explained how it should be taken :— One ounce of whisky to two of water, or, in extreme cases, in equal quantities. His Highness desired me to show him how to take it. It was the first and only "medicine" the Amîr asked me to taste before him. I poured out an ounce, added two ounces of water, and drank it. Then I sat down.

Presently, I began to feel a little giddy ; not that I was uncomfortable—on the contrary ; and it struck me what a good thing it would be to tell the Amîr an amusing story that I had suddenly thought of. I remembered, however, in time that he did not understand English, and thought that probably the point would be lost, or at any rate blunted, if it had to first penetrate an Interpreter's head. And then it occurred to me that Vodki, or whatever the Russian abomination was, followed by a whisky peg, was not a good thing for a Physician to drink, fasting. I said to His Highness, that being unaccustomed to Shrâb (alcohol), the doses I had taken were beginning, I was afraid, to affect my wits : would he allow me to withdraw ?

"Be not disturbed," His Highness said. "I can cure you."

He ordered a cup of strong tea, with a lemon squeezed in it, and directed me to drink it at once. It certainly did clear my head in a wonderful way. By-and-by, I got away to my room and went to sleep in the arm-chair.

The Amîr approved of the whisky, and requested me to write at once to Mr. Pyne to order three casks. In due time they arrived.

A day or two afterwards the Amîr had an

alarming head symptom. He described his feelings when I went to see him. There was a sort of aura passing from the feet to the head, buzzing in the ears, headache, and a feeling of great heaviness in the head. I was afraid the symptoms might be the forerunners of an apoplectic, or some nervous seizure. Happily, however, the head symptoms gradually subsided, and two days afterwards the pain had returned to the limbs.

Meanwhile, I had got to work again at the Hospital. The severer cases had accumulated considerably, and I had several surgical operations to do. One was a Stone operation on a small boy, which interested Prince Habibullah very much. The boy got well very quickly, and I took him, with a Workshop accident case that had recovered, to the Durbar that the Prince was holding in the Salaam Khana.

During the Amîr's illness, Prince Habibullah had relieved His Highness of a great deal of Governmental work. Sitting for hours nearly every day, he held Durbars and gave decisions in cases of dispute. He was the Chief Civil Magistrate of the town. Minor cases were decided by the "Kôtwal," or Chief of the Military Police of Kabul.

In addition to these Civil Magistracies there is an Ecclesiastical Court, presided over by the Chief Priest, the "Khân-i-Mullah Khan," for the Priests are those who are learned in the Mahomedan law. There is always, however, the final right of appeal to the Sovereign: though I have heard the Amîr himself apply to the Khân-i-Mullah for instruction on certain points of law.

The duty of Prince Nasrullah was to superintend the management of the Government offices, and the work of the numerous scribes and secretaries—the Mirzas. Both Princes worked hard, and one met them in all weathers, in the blazing sun, in the hissing icy winds, the heavy snow fall, or the pouring rain, riding on their way from their houses in the city to the Durbar Hall, or the Mirza's offices, in the Erg Palace. With their regular and daily attendance upon their duties, they shamed many of the high officials of the Kingdom, and were a living and daily lesson to the ordinary Afghan, whose motto is ever, "To-morrow, or after to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXV

A KABUL WINTER

Hindustani intrigue : information from the British Agent : offer of assistance : measures for protection : further intrigue. The "Royal manner." The two factions : Habibullah : Mahomed Omer. The question of succession. Return to the City House and English Society : divers discomforts : the cold of Kabul. The naked beggar boy. The old Kabul bridge. The question of "bleeding." Disbanding of a Shiah regiment. Amîr's advice to his sons. The oncoming spring : improvements in Amîr's health. The Hindustani again : Sabbath : the Amîr's decision. The Afghan noble as workshop superintendent. New Year sports. The grand stand : the crowd : refreshments. Horse-racing : collisions. Tent pegging and its dangers. Lemon slicing. The greater skill of gentlemen. Displays of horsemanship. Amîr's absence from the sports : the result. The Naû Rôz levee. Salaam to the Sultana. Amîr in the Salaam Khana : reception of the Maleks and merchants : presents. The Princes standing before the Amîr. Reception of the English engineers : the "White-beard :" his age : the Amîr's surprise.

THE interesting Hindustani whom I have designated the "Gnat," and who, by the way, was giving lessons in English to Prince Habibullah, began to spread reports in the bazaars concerning my personal character. As, however, I had done nothing to reproach myself with, I did not bother my head about the matter, until one day the Secretary of the British Agent, that highly-educated Mahomedan I have spoken of, called upon me and told me the nature of the rumours. Then I was more than a little annoyed. It was so abominable. Only the vile mind of this creature could have conceived the indignity of charging me—not openly, but by a

whispered word here and there—with impurity. What could I do? To attempt to defend myself against a charge that was not formulated, that only lived, like the typhus poison, in filthy corners—invisible—was to accuse myself.

The Agent's Secretary very kindly enquired whether there were anything he could do that could in any way give the lie to the rumours.

So far as I could see, the utmost that could be done was to refuse absolutely to allow the man to interpret or translate for me on any occasion whatsoever. I said as much to the Agent's Secretary, and he advised me to write at once to the Amîr and inform him of my decision.

I therefore wrote to His Highness, saying I did not trust the man—though of course I had nothing very definite to accuse him of; and I ended my letter by saying that rather than have this man interpret for me before His Highness, I would ask His Highness' permission to leave his service.

Lest the Amîr might think I had been instigated to write this letter by the Armenian, I asked the Agent's Secretary to translate it for me. His Highness did not answer my letter in writing, but whenever I was called before him the Hindustani was not there.

Events in after years, however, showed me that the Amîr *did* look upon the matter as a quarrel between two Interpreters, an effort on the part of each of them to trip the other up. He never knew the discomfort and mental distress that I was compelled to suffer.

The Hindustani then made another move. How

he worked it I do not know, but some weeks afterwards I received a letter from Her Highness the Sultana in which she desired me to again attend her. I was, however, to bring the Hindustani to interpret. I at once wrote to Her Highness and refused; sending also a letter to the Amîr acquainting him with the facts of the case. His Highness answered that I might be accompanied by another Interpreter if I wished. I informed the Sultana of the Amîr's decision, but, as might be expected, she being a woman, I was not sent for—much to my relief.

For some weeks His Highness appeared about the same. He was better for a day or two, then worse again. I visited him frequently, though I did not prescribe for him. He sent, however, to Bombay for certain medicines I thought suitable for his case.

One day, while I was there, little Prince Mahomed Omer came to salaam his father, and the Amîr was much amused at the authoritative way the Prince—he was not yet two—ordered about the little boys by whom he was surrounded. He frightened one of them so much that the child began to cry. The Amîr laughed, and gave the Prince an orange.

"The youngster has the manner of a King," said the Amîr.

One can only guess what the future may bring forth. The past has shown us that when the great Amîr, Dôst Mahomed, departed from this world he deputed a younger son, Shere Ali, to succeed him, and this because he was, on both mother and father's side, of Royal descent. The elder sons, not so happy, were passed over. The successes and reverses of

Shere Ali, in his contests with his brothers, is an old story.

So far as I know, Amîr Abdurrahman has never openly said whom he would wish to succeed him. I think, however, there are many indications leading one to infer that if His Highness continue to reign for another ten years, Prince Mahomed Omer will be looked upon as the heir.

There are in Kabul at the present time two distinct and opposing factions: that of the Sultana for her son's sake, and that of Prince Habibullah.

Much as I desired to avoid being drawn into intrigue or any appearance of being attached to either party—for the matter was of no possible interest to me—I know I was looked upon as belonging to the Sultana's party, chiefly, I believe, because of my dislike to the Hindustani "Gnat," who belonged to the opposing faction. Nevertheless, Prince Habibullah was always most courteous and kind.

The Sultana had a very powerful following. She is the "favourite" wife, and is most liberal and generous to those with whom she comes in contact. She is of the same blood as the Amîr, and is not unlike him in decision and strength of character.

Habibullah is a man of ability, kindly and genial, but his mother was the handmaiden to one of the Queens (daughter of the Mîr of Badakshan), who, having no children, said, "Go in unto my maid, that I may have children by her." Habibullah cannot sit in the presence of this Queen without permission: a fact which weighs with Afghan people.

I do not know what line the Indian Government would take; but the probabilities are that when the

eventful moment arrives the matter will be decided before ever the British could reach Kabul. Judging by the past, I imagine the principals of one party or other would, before many days were over, be in jail, or otherwise *hors de combat*.

Should the Amîr live till the little Prince attain adult age and the Prince fulfil the promise of his childhood, I imagine he would hold the throne alone. He is of the type of his father. Habibullah, with the moral support of an English Resident ostensibly keeping in the background, would, I take it, rule wisely. A Resident, I think, would not need a large escort, for a man of tact would be the friend, not the rival, of the King; and the Afghans are now accustomed to the presence of Feringhis in their midst. However, I am talking of things that do not concern me.

At the end of January I asked permission to move from my quarters in the Palace and return to my house in the city. I saw more of the English engineers, Stewart and Myddleton, at this time, and it was infinitely refreshing to live again in an atmosphere of wholesome English ideas, rather than breathe the air of an Oriental Court reeking with intrigue.

Though I had my house to myself, and was not liable to be intruded upon at all hours of the day by the Page boys and Chamberlains, there were, nevertheless, I found, certain bodily discomforts and inconveniences to undergo, arising chiefly from the intense cold. Owing to the numerous doors and windows in the house, there was not a room that we could keep the bitter wind out of. I had been called to the Palace in the early winter, and had only a small stock of wood in my house. This was soon gone, and now wood was

scarce and hard to get, for the Royal workshops had the first claim. The only way, therefore, to keep warm was to sit crouched on the floor close up to the charcoal sandali, and draw the quilt up to one's chin, wearing, at the same time, postîn, overcoat, and hat. After several hours this becomes monotonous. In order to hold a book and read, or at meal times to use one's knife and fork, it was necessary to protect the hands with thick woollen gloves. One day, in February, the weather struck me as being warmer than usual, and I found the temperature in my sitting-room had gone up to 20 degrees Fahr. This was not so bad, and my thermometer would register it; but when it was really cold, I was not able to find what the temperature was, for the mercury shrank into the bulb.

At dinner time it is exceedingly inconvenient to find you can neither break nor cut your bread: and to be obliged to break up your drinking water with a hammer is irritating. There is, I have heard, a large trade in frozen meat between England and New Zealand, and in this country I have eaten the erstwhile frozen sheep with great enjoyment. In Kabul it was not so. The joint came smoking from the fire, brought in over a pan of charcoal, but the centre, near the bone, was icy and raw: this was not nice. Frozen pickles are useless: and the same may be said of frozen ink: my letters, therefore, were written in pencil. Why the damson jam should not have advanced beyond the glutinous stage of freezing, I do not know, but it never froze solid. This worried me at the time: there seemed something unnatural about it. I dislike being hurried, and to be obliged to drink my morning cup of cocoa at once, to prevent it

freezing, almost made me regret my rooms at the Palace—Pages, atmosphere of intrigue and all: but I overcame this weakness.

Going to bed was a function; and I dressed carefully for the purpose. Over the woollens came a tennis coat and a sheepskin waistcoat; there were two pairs of wool socks, a dressing-gown, a pair of gloves, and a hat. The cotton-wool mattress was laid on the earth-beaten floor: it was warmer than a charpoy—but harder. A buffalo rug, a fox-skin rug, and a quilt finished the arrangements. One of the soldiers of the guard had to come and put my candle out when the performance was over.

I do not know how many people died of cold, but there were a good many among the poorest. Going to the Hospital I used often to see a beggar boy of about fourteen lying naked on the snow monotonously droning,

"Az baraï Khuda, yak ticca nân bidde!"—"For the sake of God, one piece of bread give me!"

I was told he had gone about naked all his life. I missed him one day, and thought he must be frozen to death; but, no, I saw him again a year or two afterwards. Though he lay on the snow, he always chose a place sheltered from the wind, and where the sun was shining brightly.

There was an unusually heavy snowfall that winter, and the Amîr gave orders to remove the old brick bridge over the Kabul river. The bridge was very solidly built, and was said to be two hundred years old. It was situated below the mountain gorge, and just outside the workshops. His Highness considered that when the snows were melting the great volume

of water checked at the bridge piers would overflow the workshops and swamp part of the town. Future events proved the accuracy of the Amîr's prognostication.

In the workshops the engineers had the greatest trouble to keep the steam up. Dry wood could not be got, and with wet wood the fires could not be kept going. The pipes carrying the water supply to the boiler were constantly freezing solid, and at last work with steam machinery came to a standstill.

My visits to the Amîr continued. His manner was exceedingly kind. He described his symptoms daily, and frequently spoke of again placing himself under my care. He promised me leave of absence, and said many other things that were very pleasant to hear.

The Hakims, however, bled him again and again, and his recovery was exceedingly tedious. I explained to His Highness how harmful bleeding was in gout, and advised him not to be bled again : His Highness was displeased with me. Some days afterwards, however, he informed me that the Indian, English, and Russian newspapers, in commenting upon his case, had expressed views in regard to bleeding in harmony with mine. He has been bled many times since then.

Towards the end of February the cold began to break. I did not see any skating during the winter, so that as Kabul is the capital of the country, I doubt if this is a sport among the Afghans. Not realizing that cold in that country is so intense, I had left my skates in England, otherwise I would have astonished the natives. I have no doubt about that, although I cannot skate.

On the 1st of March the Amîr disbanded a regiment of Shiah Mahomedans : he himself is a Sûnni. This created a good deal of sensation in Kabul at the time, for there is one part of the town, Chindawal, devoted to Shiahs, though the majority of Afghans are Sûnnis.

Two days afterwards I heard there was some trouble at the Palace. I do not know all the details, for, as I said, news from the Palace filters out slowly and imperfectly. The Amîr was depressed, I take it, by his long and tedious illness, for he called his sons to him and told them that he had only some ten years to live ; and that in all probability neither Habibullah nor any other of his sons would succeed him. Ishak, on the one hand, and Ayoub on the other, were candidates for the Throne, and it behoved the Princes his sons to be amicable one towards the other : a bundle of branches bound together was strong, but taken separately they could be easily broken.

The sun began to grow powerful, and the snow melted rapidly. Fires and the sandali became unnecessary ; one had only to sit in the sun if one felt the cold.

On March the 10th it was comparatively warm. As it was my birthday, I went in the afternoon to the Palace to visit the Amîr. His Highness was at dinner. He sent me some grapes, and I sat in one of the side rooms, or alcoves, and waited. After dinner I talked to His Highness. He told me he was better, and could walk a little. He was not so thin as he had been. After talking to me for some time, he ordered a beautiful little Kataghani horse,

brown with black points, to be brought from the stables, and asked me to accept it.

Shortly after this, the interesting Hindustani Interpreter—the Gnat—endeavoured to prejudice the two English engineers, Stewart and Myddleton, in His Highness's eyes. He reported to Sirdar Usuf Khan, the Amîr's uncle, who, nominally, superintended the workshops, that the Englishmen, though Christians, did no work on Friday. He being the only Interpreter they had, they rode to my house one evening to inform me. I directed the Armenian to write to His Highness and explain that the engineers had given up *their* Sabbath to His Highness's service; had His Highness any objection to their keeping the Mahomedan Sabbath instead of their own?

The Amîr answered that he had not the slightest objection; and he wrote to the Sirdar that it was folly to expect the men to work every day in the week. The Sirdar was a courtly old gentleman, but in the shops there were constant frictions. He no more understood the nature of an English workman than he understood physiology or any other science. I think Sir Salter—then Mr.—Pyne was also somewhat of a puzzle to him. Pyne has strong characteristics and decided views, and the Sirdar Sahib had not the former, though he assumed the latter, and on a subject in which he was but ill informed.

When the thaw commenced, the engineers endeavoured to make up for time lost during the frost by frequently working all night. There was a certain amount of work to be got through by the Mahomedan New Year's Day, in order that a good show of arms and ammunition could be laid before the Amîr.

The last day of the old year was a Friday, and the holidays began then. At the foot of the Asmai mountains horse-racing and sports were held. Crowds of spectators lined the road, and the Grand Stand was the grey, old rocky mountain: he had put on his holiday garb; all the lower half was crowded with gaily-dressed Afghans, sitting or standing in thousands in the blazing sun.

For the Princes and richer men tents were erected on any sufficiently level rock, and the servants, lighting a wood fire near, served them with tea, and cakes, and sweetmeats. For the poorer people there were itinerant cake merchants, sweetmeat vendors, and the Sakabi, with his water-skin and wooden cup; and for those who could afford it there was iced sherbet—lemon, orange, or rose, in tumblers. There were toy sellers, too, with paper flags, whistles, and cheap walking-sticks from India; these were bought by the crowds who thronged the streets on their way to the mountain.

The horse-racing, over a course some five hundred yards in length, more or less according to the fancy of the riders, and on a hard road, was, compared with what we call horse-racing, somewhat of a caricature. There were no prizes and no starters: anybody could gallop up and down the road who wished. As many did wish, and as there was no sort of order and much reckless riding, collisions were frequent. Sometimes a horse and rider would be sent spinning. I do not know if there were many breakages; I did not go and see: I concluded they would fetch me if they wanted me. One considerable smash occurred just opposite where I was, and the friends came and

gathered up the fragments that remained. They threw water in the face of the riding fragment, and he presently recovered: the ridden fragment limped painfully away.

There was "tent-pegging," or something in a sense equivalent. There was no tent-peg, but a boy's cap was put on the ground, and the soldiers charged at it with lances. The owner of the cap was not distressed mentally: his cap was fairly safe. The riders were very skilful in scoring the ground near, but only one or two touched the cap, and then a murmur went up from the spectators. The way the small Afghan boys gathered near to see the sport was rather horrifying: I fully expected to see one skewered: however, it was not so written in the book of Fate.

There was also "lemon-slicing." A lemon was stuck on the end of a rod, which was planted upright in the ground. The soldiers dashed up one after another, flourishing their sabres, and looking very fierce and terrible; but they did not often hurt the lemon.

Occasionally, some men of position would join in. These were, as a rule, more skilful with both lance and sword than the soldiers were: possibly, they devoted more time to practice. My Turkestan friend, the Mirza Abdur Rashid, rode in: he was not at all unskilful with the lance. I saw, though not on this occasion, the Sirdar Abdul Kudus Khan, son of the Amîr's cousin, and Naim Khan, the Courtier, tent-pegging and shooting at a mark while going full gallop: they were exceedingly skilful.

My small friend, Mahomed Omer, son of the

Deputy Commander-in-Chief, rode in on a little white Arab. He was about thirteen, but he must have practised considerably, for he picked up the cap on his lance the first try.

The small boy who accompanied Prince Nasrullah on his visit to England this year was the younger brother of Mahomed Omer. He had grown so that I did not recognize him on the platform at Victoria, when the Prince arrived, until he came up and spoke to me.

There were displays of horsemanship: standing on the saddle and holding on to the reins, with the horse at full gallop; picking up a handkerchief from the ground while at a gallop, and so on: however, there was nothing but what I had seen done in England, and with greater skill. I had imagined that the Afghans were born riders, skilful swordsmen, and deadly shots; but whatever the hillmen, as a class, may be, the soldiers certainly are not remarkable.

The Princes were at the "tomasha," but His Highness the Amîr was, of course, unable to honour the sports by his presence. I was told, indeed, that he now very rarely does so; and the result has been that the sports have fallen off considerably.

The next day was "Naû Roz," or the New Year's Day. I was informed that His Highness would be able to receive me at three p.m. In the morning, therefore, I rode to the Babur Badshah Gardens to salaam the Sultana, who was staying in the Bungalow there. On the way I met Mahomed Omer and complimented him on his skill with the lance. He

is a bright little fellow, and he seemed greatly pleased at being complimented. He was gorgeous in scarlet and gold, and was at the head of a troop of cavalry, in his exalted post of "Commander-in-Chief" to Prince Mahomed Omer.

At the gardens we had tea and cigarettes in a tent while our congratulations were taken in to the Sultana. I did not, of course, see Her Highness, and she sent the New Year greetings by her messenger, "Sirdar"—the girl-boy.

By the time we had returned to Kabul it was three o'clock, and I rode on to the Palace.

When I arrived His Highness was being conveyed in a palanquin to the Salaam Khana, where there were arranged for his inspection, rifles, sabres, cartridges, sword-sticks, rupees, and other productions of the workshops.

His Highness was kind enough to stop and enquire how I was. He evidently remembered—as I did—that at the last big reception of this kind *I* had been the invalid, for he asked if I had had any return of the illness. I was happy to tell him I was well, and that my greatest wish was that he might soon be the same. While His Highness was speaking, Col. Attaullah Khan, the British Agent, came and stood near me; by the side of such a splendid man I felt a stripling, for I am but a meagre six feet with my boots on.

When the inspection of arms was over, His Highness, followed by the Princes and the Courtiers, entered the Salaam Khana and took his seat on the couch in one of the end rooms. He kindly allowed me to be seated, though everyone else stood, and

taking some cigars from a box he sent them to me by a Page boy, and invited me to smoke.

Presently, the Maleks, and Merchants, and others, who wished to make New Year's offerings, were admitted. They stood just inside the doorway, and round the lower end of the room. The Court attendants took the presents and laid them on the ground in front of the Amîr.

There were rolls of silks and satins; lamps, musical-boxes, Russian boots, vases, Japanese cabinets, sugar, sweets, inexpensive writing-cases, pocket-knives, flowers, and in the midst of the medley I noticed a pair of trouser stretchers.

His Highness did not seem very much interested in the presents, though Prince Habibullah occasionally took up an article and examined it.

When the offering of presents was completed, chairs were brought for the Princes and they sat down. Why I should have been allowed to sit while the Princes stood, I do not know, unless it were, as I sometimes thought, that the Amîr wished to guard the Princes from the danger of acquiring a too exalted notion of their own personal importance.

Prince Habibullah was always courteous, and struck me as having much more *savoir vivre* than Prince Nasrullah.

At five p.m. Messrs Stewart and Myddleton were received by His Highness. Chairs were placed for them and tea was brought. After the usual polite salutations His Highness asked Stewart how old he was. The question, no doubt, was suggested to the Amîr's mind by the fact that Stewart's hair and beard were silvery white. Afghans, when their hair turns

grey, almost invariably, unless they are Priests, dye it black or red. His Highness's hair and beard were very grey when he was ill, but were blue-black afterwards, and I could not help connecting this remarkable fact with the many bottles of hair dye I saw in the stores.

His Highness was surprised to hear that Stewart was only forty-eight. He laughed when he heard it, and said he thought he must be a hundred.

After we had drunk tea permission was given us to withdraw, and we rode home. During the reception the Armenian had translated. Waiting outside and expecting to be sent for, was the Hindustani, but though Prince Habibullah asked where he was, no one answered.

CHAPTER XXVI

A KABUL SPRING

Spring clothing: a grateful Afghan. Poison bowls. The dreadful book. A haunted house: the skeleton in the garden. Increase of patients. Called to the Palace: Amîr's costume: flowers: Amîr's generous proposal. Troubles of a Ruler: Secretary in disgrace. Amîr's plans for the future. Geologists in the service: their difficulties. Occidental *v.* Oriental. Mercantile commissions. The Armenian's leave. Delay. The locusts. Prince Mahomed Omer and his Lâla. The Palace gardens. A military Durbar. Amîr's thoughtfulness. A portrait. Amîr's opinion of his people: education of his soldiers. The arrest: murder of the prisoner: the Amîr's decision. Other portraits. Ramazàn. Rising of the river. The Id Festival. The Physician's plans: the Amîr's comment. Prince Habibullah's portrait: the Shaghassi's criticism. Prince Nasrullah's portrait: his remark.

THE holidays lasted a week. The sports were continued at Asmai, and in the evening fireworks were let off in the town.

Whatever the weather may be, postîns and winter clothing are never left off till Naû Roz, and never continued afterwards. The weather, however, in Afghanistan behaves more according to rule and is less eccentric than in England. I became clothed in a tunic of camel's hair and a leather belt. Around the brow the awe-inspiring turban was wreathed in many folds—heavy but picturesque and protecting. The camel-hair cloth was given me by a grateful Afghan because I cut off his little son's toe. He also gave me two ancient China bowls. These were intelligent articles, for if at any time food should be put into

them containing poison they would at once break themselves into a thousand pieces—at least, so I was informed; I did not, however, put the bowls to the inconvenience of exhibiting their power of discernment, for it seemed better to keep them as they were than to take them home in a thousand pieces.

At this time I found that the engineers had got a book, and I borrowed it, having had nothing new to read for many months. The book was that ancient and gruesome collection of stories called "The Night Side of Nature." The narratives in it were similar to those that the *Review of Reviews* laid before Seekers after Truth, under the title of "Real Ghost Stories."

It was a dreadful book. Read it alone in the haunted wing of a house, and in a town full of the memory of murders and midnight assassins; where in the dead silence of the night unaccountable noises force themselves upon the startled ear; and see how you like it.

I knew my house was haunted, because I had been told so.

One evening, absorbed in reading, I became conscious that the windows rattled, a door slammed, and suddenly, right over my head, there was a sound as of a heavy body rolling rapidly along; and a horrible shriek split the air. The awe-inspiring volume slipped from the nerveless fingers (anatomically this is not accurate), and palpitating with a wordless horror, I sat powerless. For a long minute all was still: then the sound as of stealthy footsteps struck on the straining ear—on the tympanic membrane as a matter of fact. The door moved slowly on its creaking hinge, and—

"Kîst!" "Who is it!" rang in my ears.

It was my own voice, hoarse and unrecognizable, uttering the cry. I clutched the ready revolver and cocked it.

"Sahib! dead man, all is buried in garden. His bones me see."

It was my Indian cook who brought the information. This, then, was the cause of the unnatural manifestations. Doubtless, the house had been the scene of a horrible murder, and the criminals had hastily hidden the ghastly proof of their deed in the garden; but murder will out, and the unrestful spirit of the victim was wandering around.

Now I had studied Forensic Medicine and had read Gaboriau. It behoved me, therefore, to work out this crime, track the murderers, and bring them to justice.

"Ustughonha biya inja,"—"Bring hither the bones," I said.

I know the human bones, every ridge, furrow, and knob, from the fifth Metatarsal to the Sphenoid. Many a night in the years gone by had I sat poring over a bone, while the stars twinkled in the heavens—at least, I expect they did; not that it matters.

The servant returned, and with horror and disgust depicted on his swarthy face laid a small bone on the table in front of me.

"But where are the others? Bring the skull, man—the head."

"Sahib, other me not see."

With an eagle glance I pierced him, and he shrank back.

"Drivelling idiot, son of uncleanness, scoundrel,

whose heart is blacker than his face—this is not a man's bone. Bring me human bones."

"Sahib, other me not got."

"Get some, then, and at once;" and he fled from the room.

Was I to be trifled with in this way; to be made small and of no account? I was prepared to unravel the mystery, and was I to be turned aside by a servant—an Indian servant—a black Indian servant?

But I cooled down afterwards, and by and by, when he came in to enquire if I wanted anything, I said, No! he could go to bed.

In April, the weather was beautiful, sunny and bright, without being too hot. The number of patients coming to the Hospital increased as travelling became easier. I saw about a hundred and thirty cases daily. Some came great distances—from Turkestan, Kandahar, Herat, and the borders of Kaffristan.

On the 5th of April, His Highness sent word that he wished to see me. When I arrived at the Palace I found His Highness alone, but for one Secretary and the Page boys. He looked much better and stronger than he had done for a long time. He was attired in native costume, in a bright coloured silk robe, a small white turban wound round a gold-embroidered cap, and loose white Oriental pyjamas.

I stopped some distance from the couch and bowed: His Highness beckoned me to a chair near him and enquired if I were well. Then he continued reading a letter the Secretary had just

written, and cigarettes were brought me. It seemed a pity to smoke, for the air of the Palace was sweet with the scent of freshly-cut flowers, hyacinths, wallflowers, and narcissi.

Suddenly, His Highness looked up and asked me when I should like to start for England : he said the weather would soon be hot and unsuitable for travelling in India ; and before long, storms at sea were to be feared.

I replied that I was awaiting His Highness's orders. He asked me how long leave I should like ; and when I said I left that entirely to him, he enquired whether six months would be sufficient.

His Highness said also, that he would let me know before my return in what part of the country he was to be found, whether in Herat, Kandahar, Turkestan, or Kabul, so that I could join him. He desired me to draw the plans of a house such as I should like to live in, and he would build it for me.

If my wife, after I were married, wished to return with me, he should be pleased ; and should she after some months find the climate uncongenial, his permission would be granted her to return to England. Should she, however, prefer to remain in England, leave of absence would be granted me every two years. His Highness also told me many interesting things : among them the reason why Afghanistan is poverty-stricken and powerless, and he sketched methods in which the resources of the country might be developed if only his people had sense enough to follow out his directions ; but, as he said, there were so few he could trust.

This very man before him, the Secretary, could

not be trusted even to write a letter correctly; and yet, he said, this man and his brother were secretaries to Amîr Shere Ali; and more, they had the keeping of the King's Signet. Why, therefore, with such men in power, should not the country have become weak, poverty-stricken, and on the verge of ruin!

One of his designs, he told me, was to again employ an English geologist, and when the presence of valuable minerals was made known, to open up roads and start mining operations.

His Highness's words were words of wisdom: but looking back, as I do, with a knowledge of the past, I am greatly in doubt as to whether the nature of the Oriental will allow to any European geologist in the Amîr's service anything like a fair chance of success in his endeavours. From the outset his good faith is doubted. I heard from Captain Griesbach, C.I.E., how hampered he had been on every hand; how impossible it was made for him to do any useful work; for the whisper had been spread—even I heard it—that he carried a note-book, and if he found a mineral of value it was not the Amîr to whom the fact was reported, but the British Government. Disgusted that his efforts should be so curtailed and his powers made useless, the Captain left the service.

The next geologist who entered the service was Mr. Arthur Collins, F.G.S., who was recommended to the Amîr's Agent by the Home Office. His experiences were very similar to those of Captain Griesbach. He was followed about rigorously by a guard, and from whatever place he took a specimen, from the same place an official in his ignorance took what he considered to be a similar specimen:

this was to act as a check on the geologist! After a few months Mr. Collins, new to the country, photographed some interesting geological formations that he saw. At once it was reported that the new geologist was a political agent spying out the nakedness of the land. He was recalled to Kabul and kept, as Captain Griesbach had been, for months doing nothing, till, in disgust, he also resigned. Whether any other able man will in the future consider it other than waste of time to work against such obstacles—petty, intangible, but real—I know not. The game seems hardly worth the candle: unless, indeed, one thinks fit to descend and meet the Oriental on his own ground; to employ bribery; or, having learnt the language, to indulge in intrigue and trip his enemies one by one:—not a difficult matter—for that any educated Englishman of ordinary intelligence is a match for an Afghan or Hindustani I have not a doubt, granted that he cares to employ his brain in such unclean work. Pitch, however, is proverbially defiling, and the triumph is lost if one comes out of a game besmeared.

His Highness desired me to inform him as soon as I had finished the arrangements I wished to make at the Hospital to enable the Hindustani assistants to carry on the work during my absence; then I was to start on my journey home. He said many kind things to me; among others, that he considered me a man worthy of trust. He added that there were certain orders he should commission me to execute in London.

These, I found, were to be the sending out of

materials—silks, satins, and cloth ; and jewellery of various kinds. My education, however, having been medical, I was not in any sense a business man, and it occurred to me that this was a suitable opportunity for acceding to the Armenian's request, and taking him to London with me : he could attend to these matters better than I.

A few days afterwards, therefore, I wrote to His Highness, and asked permission for the Armenian to accompany me to England. His Highness granted my request, and, when the time arrived, generously gave the Armenian two thousand rupees to pay his expenses.

We did not, however, start on the journey so soon as I had expected, for His Highness desired me to paint his portrait again. Accordingly, a few days afterwards I went to the Palace, but I found on examination that His Highness had not recovered strength sufficiently to enable him to undergo the fatigue of sitting for a portrait. This seemed likely to put a stop to my home going for an indefinite time ; until a thought struck me—why should not I paint a portrait from the photograph that the Sultana had given me ? I said nothing to His Highness, but set to work.

While I was working at this portrait I saw some extraordinary clouds come quivering along just above the tree tops. They seemed almost as though they were made up of myriads of little birds. I learnt what they were soon enough. The locusts had come. The year before I had seen in Turkestan swarms of little black birds, the only birds, they told me, that feed on locusts. The Amîr had made an order that

all who killed these birds were to be fined. As, however, they had a habit of devouring mulberries as well as locusts, many of them were killed. Curiously enough the locusts did not settle in Kabul, though on the outskirts of the town one occasionally saw a tree leafless. They came from the direction of Peshawur, and at Jelalabad and other places on the way they had worked havoc.

Towards the end of April the portrait was finished, and I went to the Palace to lay it before the Amîr.

Entering the Palace gardens I met little Prince Mahomed Omer riding out on horseback surrounded by his guard, with his Lâla or Tutor walking by his side. He looked very dignified and proud as he sat his horse alone. The Lâla whispered to him, and he answered my bow by touching his cap: he was a year and eight months old. When I reached the Palace His Highness sent a Page to conduct me to one of the gardens where he said he should be sitting very shortly.

We went through a passage under the wall of the fort, across the moat, and round to the gardens on the west side of the Palace. There were several tents erected, but the Amîr's, which was a gorgeous one, lined with crimson and white, with glass doors, was pitched on a circular piece of ground, surrounded by a narrow artificial stream, edged with Pampas grass. The circular stream was fed by a perfectly straight stream, edged thickly with Pampas grass, and the water flowed away by a similar stream on the right. All around were flower-beds and trees, and in the distance to the west, the Paghman Mountains,

capped with snow. Behind was the Palace. In front of the Amîr's tent a large awning was stretched.

Here on the carpets the Chief Officers of the army were seated chatting together. Crossing the stream by a little bridge, I joined them, and a chair was brought. For the Amîr, was an arm-chair covered with blue velvet and old gold coloured satin, and in front of it a tiger skin footrug. Out in the garden two or three hundred soldiers were drawn up : it was a military Durbar.

Presently the Officers jumped up and joined the soldiers, and I found the Amîr was approaching. He came in a palanquin with a guard of soldiers, and in front marched the Page boys, each armed with a small rifle. His Highness was dressed in a grey military uniform embroidered with gold, and a grey astrakhan hat with a diamond star. He looked very handsome, but rather pale.

When His Highness drew near I stood up and took off my turban :—this is not a difficult matter, one seizes the top of the conical cap round which the turban is tightly wound. The Armenian who was with me said, "Salaam aleikoum," and when His Highness looked up I bowed. He asked me how I was, and then descending from the palanquin he walked slowly to the chair. I was very glad to see him walking again. It was a cloudy and windy day, and presently His Highness turned to me and desired me to cover my head lest I took cold.

Then the portrait I had just painted was brought forward for His Highness to see. He was pleased with it, and surprised that I should have painted it without a sitting. He told me it required certain

alterations, chiefly in the colouring, and he gave directions for the portrait I had painted in Turkestan to be taken down from the Palace and brought to my house to correct this one by :

" For," said he, " that is an exact likeness."

I was at the Durbar about three hours, and His Highness told me many things ; among others was this :—There were out in the garden several companies of soldiers drawn up before him, young men and lads, perhaps 300. Of these there were about twenty of whom he wished to make officers. He said :

" These men are gentlemen ; their fathers and their grandfathers were gentlemen and men of position, but such is the ignorance of the people I govern that not one of them can read or write : they know nothing. What work can they do ? None. They can quarrel and fight ; it is all they are fit for."

He told me that he had given orders for them to be taught, so that they would be able, at least, to write and read a letter.

He had a regiment of boy soldiers — the " Mahomedan Regiment," these also he had directed to be taught reading and writing.

One incident occurred which may be interesting :

A soldier of the guard, a man whom I had attended in Mazar, a handsome fellow who seemed to be always laughing, came up to His Highness to report an arrest he had made. He said that while he was on guard over His Highness's tent an intruder approached and he challenged him. No answer being returned he tried to persuade him to go away, saying :—

"Sahib, this is Amîr Sahib's tent; the tent of the great King; come not here, I pray you."

But the intruder, treating him with silent contempt, advanced. Once more he tried persuasion. Humbly taking off his turban he implored:—

"Sahib! Baraï-i-Khuda! For God's sake, approach no nearer; it is Amîr Sahib's tent."

This last request being no more effective than the other, he determined to act boldly and arrest the intruder, be he whom he might. Throwing down his rifle he pounced upon him, overpowered him, and then proceeded to make him fast. Driving four tent pegs into the ground he fastened his legs to two of the pegs and his head to the other two —in the manner that unruly horses are fixed in Afghanistan.

He felt he had done his duty, and taking up his rifle he continued his march in front of the tent. But, wai, wai! that he should have to tell it, when his back was turned, up came two of the gardeners and murdered the prisoner as he lay.

"Ah!" said the Amîr, with a gleam in his eye; "bring hither the body."

The soldier withdrew, and presently returned bearing the body of the victim. It was a little mouse.

The Amîr looked at the soldier a moment and then burst into a hearty laugh. Everyone joined in—except the gardeners. They were called up—forty of them—and after being reprimanded for allowing mice in the garden, were ordered each of them to pay a fine of a certain number of mice every year.

The next day when the Turkestan portrait arrived I set to work to correct the new one by it; and when that was finished I copied the first, since His Highness approved of it, on another canvas.

At the beginning of May, when both were completed, I took them to the Palace. Hearing, however, that His Highness was not sitting, I was coming away, when he sent for me back again. He was much pleased with the paintings, and taking a cigarette out of his case he fitted it in a holder and gave it me to smoke. He also said he should be greatly pleased if I would paint a portrait of the two eldest Princes before I left. I said that nothing would give me greater pleasure: but afterwards, on thinking it over, my remark struck me as being somewhat beyond the truth.

It was the month of Ramazàn, the yearly Mahomedan fast. The Prince could not sit fasting; Religion would not allow him to eat in the day time; and my capabilities would not allow me to paint in the night, and we were at a standstill. Instead of sitting for his portrait, therefore, the Prince took unto himself another wife, and invited me to the wedding. I have described the Reception after the wedding, in an early part of the narrative.

On May 9th the Fast of Ramazàn ended, and on the 10th was the festival of Id. It was a bright sunny day, which, after the most unusual storms of hail and rain we had been having, was delightful. The hailstones of the day before were as big as the end of one's finger—I brought some in to examine.

In the night, the river, which, owing to the melting snows and the rain had been rapidly rising, became so swollen as to be a source of no little danger to a part of the town. Fortunately the bridge had been almost cleared away, but as it was a regiment of soldiers were sent out to strengthen the embankment of the river. There was no moon, and they worked away all night by torchlight; otherwise, as the river roared along with great force and at a tremendous speed, the Chindawal division of the town would have been flooded and the houses washed away.

Îd being a festival everyone was dressed in his smartest, and the servants all had clean white turbans and white clothes. According to the custom of the country I gave presents and a feast to my servants and guard, and went to the Durbar to salute the Amîr. I told His Highness that when I was in England I would take pains to perfect myself in the Persian language: that I found difficulty in doing so in Kabul, as I had neither dictionary nor grammar. His Highness laughed: he said—

"I think not. You will take unto yourself a wife, you will visit your friends, but you will not learn Persian."

He was quite right.

Two days after this Prince Habibullah gave me the first sitting for his portrait. He sat in the Salaam Khana, and when I arrived I found him in the upstairs room, the Guest-house, which has large windows all round. As the light came in every direction, painting there was an impossibility.

I could not get any shadow under the brow or

chin to give an effect of relief, and I asked His Highness if he would sit in another room. As the Prince had studied the art of photography he understood the difficulty, and we moved at once to one of the lower rooms. Here, by shutting the shutters of one window, and hanging a curtain over the lower part of another, we managed to get a very fair light.

There were several of the Prince's suite in the room, and when I put in the preliminary charcoal sketch the Prince's Shaghassi said :—

"Al-láh! What a colour he is making the Prince. The Sirdar Sahib is not black!!"

If I had known that I should find photographs of these portraits of the Princes in possession of the *Graphic* when I arrived in London, and that woodcuts of them would be in many of the illustrated London papers, I should probably have postponed my holiday for a time and put more work into the paintings. As it was, Prince Habibullah's was painted from four sittings and Prince Nasrullah's from three. That of the elder Prince was the better likeness. Prince Nasrullah's portrait, on being carried from my house to the Palace after I had painted His Highness's name on it, met with an accident and was badly scratched. It was sent back to me, therefore, to repair. When I had it again, it struck me that one part was not quite correct in drawing, and I worked at it somewhat without the sitter. When it was dry I sent it in again. The Prince approved of the alteration, and he desired to send it back to me yet again, for he said :—

"Behold! it is handsomer than it was; and if I

send it a third time may be it will become still more beautiful."

By the time the pictures were finished Mr. Pyne had returned to Kabul from India, bringing with him an English tailor. The day Mr. Pyne arrived I joined the English party at the Workshops, and we had dinner together.

CHAPTER XXVII

ON LEAVE

The last Durbar : the Amîr's remark : a wedding present. Adieux. The journey down. An awful day : "difficult hot :" the walk. Played out. The stream and the wall. Triumph : exhaustion. The work of the locusts. Unwelcome guests : a rejected plan. The breeding establishment : a study in colour. A want of tact. An illegal march. Simla. The despatch. Dinners and dances. The study of character : an education. The Armenian in London. The "hub" of the universe : return to India.

On the last day in May I went to the Durbar, for I thought that surely now I had finished all there was to do before I started. His Highness received me most kindly.

I said that in my life I had filled other appointments, but that His Highness's kindness to me had exceeded all that I had met with before. He said :—

"Why should I not treat you kindly ? You are a 'Friend of my Heart.' I say this not to give you pleasure, but because I mean it."

I replied that I felt the honour he did me deeply, for I was his servant and he a King. He said :—

"I have seen many men : high and low ; rich and poor ; men of noble descent, and men of obscure birth ; but I call no man a friend of my heart till I have watched his deeds. I judge a man by his deeds, and

not by his words, and again I address you as a Friend of my Heart."

His Highness desired me to take eight months' leave; my pay was to continue during my absence, and, in addition, he gave me as a wedding present an order upon his Agent with the Government in India for a considerable sum of money.

The Armenian, who was to accompany me, received written instructions relating to the commissions the Amîr wished executed in London. During his absence his salary would be paid to his wife in Kabul.

The next day my packing was done. Firmans for pack-horses, tents, and guard procured, and I took a formal leave of His Highness the Amîr.

I visited Prince Habibullah, who received me most kindly, and after he had conversed with me for about an hour I took leave of him. I then rode out to Aliabad, a few miles out of Kabul, where Her Highness the Sultana was staying, and sent in my salaams to her and the little Prince Mahomed Omer. Her Highness sent a large tray of sweetmeats, and presented me with some very beautiful embroidered cashmere.

On June 4th, after a good-bye to Mr. Pyne and the other Englishmen, I started on my journey home. I will not trace the journey in detail: it was excessively hot, and I will merely mention one or two incidents that occurred.

One day the march was particularly trying. We were at Borikâb. I had breakfast at dawn—three small poached-eggs and some tea. The baggage and tents were sent off, and when the sun rose we

started gaily. Gaily—*I*—poor fool! little did I know—but you shall hear. We trotted and trotted, and shuffled and climbed by mountain and gorge, over pebble and rock, until at midday we reached Jigdilik. We descended, and sat in the valley in the cool shade of the big trees and had lunch. Mine was a hard-boiled egg from my holster, a piece of native bread, and some tea. I thought the march was over, and lay basking in the shade. Was ever mortal so deluded?

"Sir, please you get up and start; a long way we go to-day," — thus the Armenian after an hour.

"Start!! man alive, we started hours ago: you are not going any further to-day, surely."

"Sir, we must make haste. Between Dacca and Lalpur, this month is very difficult hot: and slowly by slowly it makes hotter. Better this, we get through it soon: you European."

Immortal Pluto! not the Turkestan plains over again!

"Come along, then," said I, jumping up, "let us start at once," and we started.

Along the narrow rocky ravine we rode—just after midday in June—and the sun shot down at us. It dried our blood, and the glare burnt into our brain, at any rate, into mine; I don't know about the cast-iron Afghans.

Up the long winding gorge we climbed, and at the summit the breeze struck us. We caught a few long breaths of coolness, then plunged into another long winding descent with precipitous rocks on either side. On and on we trudged, hour after hour, till

at last my bodily powers gave out. This, by the way, was the road that Brydon went over.

Ride further I could not, for I had not recovered my strength since last year's illness. Nine stone five pounds is not adequate for a man of my height: it does not leave enough available muscle. Nevertheless, no one who is not a Salamander—an amphibious animal, allied to the newts, and capable of living in fire—can comfortably rest on burning rocks. There was no shade of any sort, not a tree, nothing but glaring rocks and stones. I got off my horse therefore, and walked. I was conscious at the time that the Afghan guard thought the sun had made me mad, and as they eyed me suspiciously, I tried to assume a fierce aspect, and stalked along down hill at the rate of five miles an hour. The change of motion rested the muscles, and the guard on horseback came shuffling along hastily behind me. Then came a climb, and I got on again refreshed and perspiring, but more internally weary, as I found after riding twenty minutes. Over the rest of the march I will draw the veil of forgetfulness. It was too terrible for words.

In the evening, we reached Gundamuk. I perceived that my tent was being put up in a garden, and between me and that garden were a stream and a wall. I had dismounted, my horse had been led away, and I was standing on my own legs. I had but little faith in them, for they seemed inclined to fail me in my hour of need. There was the wall, staring me in the face, to say nothing of the stream. True, the stream was but a foot wide, and the wall had a gap in it, nevertheless, they were difficulties

to be overcome. There were two courses open to me: one was to sit on the ground where I was, and wait until someone could come and help me across: another was to take time by the forelock and get across myself somehow or other. Everyone was busy with the baggage and tents, and no one seemed to perceive my dilemma: therefore, being resolute by nature, I determined upon the latter course, and stood for a time considering how I would accomplish it.

Staggering boldly to the stream, I allowed myself to fall forwards till I caught the wall with both hands; clinging on and clenching my teeth I gave a vigorous heave to one leg, and in a moment was astride the gap: nerving myself for another violent effort I swung the other leg over.

I had conquered, and, moreover, without experiencing the loss of dignity that a fall in the stream would have occasioned. Exhilarated by my success, I reeled into the tent and sank on the carpet. "Sank," perhaps, hardly gives the correct impression, for as soon as the legs were bent at the knee I sat down with disagreeable suddenness. I then proceeded to drink large quantities of liquid—tea, water, and sherbet—and when my charpoy was brought into the tent I climbed on to it and lay down, hoping to lose my senses in forgetfulness. It was without avail, and I rolled from side to side seeking rest and finding none.

In the course of three hours the unwilling fowl was caught, killed, and cooked, and I made a tough, moist meal. But now I could rest, and no longer in vain did I court the Goddess of sleep.

Further on in our march we found the locusts had been at work. Around Jelalabad the country in spite of the heat had the appearance of winter : the trees were bare. In the Palace gardens the oranges hung nearly ripe, but every leaf had gone. When we arrived there we had afternoon tea in the Guest-house at the Palace, and afterwards rode on some few miles beyond Jelalabad, where we camped.

I had dinner in the open and then went into my tent to lie down : but I came out again—quickly. The locusts had invaded it and had crawled up inside the tent and over the charpoy, so that all was green —a beautiful green shot with pink : but it gave me no pleasure, the colour seemed out of place. Moreover, I could not lie down without crunching my unwelcome guests ; and no host, I take it, cares to lie upon the mangled remains of guests, be they never so unwelcome.

We had noticed that day as we travelled along that a careful peasant had dug a shallow pond at the foot of a beautiful mulberry tree. The locusts had perforce spared that tree : they might have tumbled off and they cannot swim ; but they had spitefully nipped off every leaf that spread beyond the water. A shallow pond, therefore, was dug some little distance away in the hard-baked earth for my charpoy to stand in, and since we could not get the locusts out of the tent, we determined to take the tent away from the locusts. On further consideration, however, it seemed likely, and indeed the Armenian insisted very strongly on the point, that if I lay all night with my bed in a pond I

should wake up in the morning with fever or rheumatism, or something disagreeable which would be likely to hinder our journey.

We left the pond, therefore, and moved away to a bare open space with never a blade of grass nor a leaf anywhere near. Here my tent was pitched, and with a feeling of restful security I sat upon my charpoy and enjoyed the cool of the evening. A tickling sensation at the back of the neck caused me to raise my hand, and I brushed away a great locust. Ach! the beasts were all over me: they seemed to be evolved spontaneously out of nothing. They were not so, however, for on the mountains outside Kabul we saw myriads of the young locusts about the size of black ants hopping about in the warm sand. This was one of their breeding establishments where the eggs are hatched. The life-history of the locust may be looked upon as an interesting study in colour, for when he is a babe he is black, as a youth he is pink, and in adult age green. Two and a half inches is his length, but he looks longer: he is all legs and wings. As a creature that crawls I object to him.

I called for assistance, and the tent was cleared: but they have no tact, these Locusts, and they came in again and again like so many Afghan Page boys, welcome or not. I spent an active and shuddering evening brushing them off my neck, shoulders, and wrists. At last in despair I covered my head over with a sheet and went to sleep, dreaming I was being crawled over by scorpions and centipedes.

When we got to the "difficult hot" place (*sakht*, hard, difficult, severe) between Lalpur and Dacca, the

sky was cloudy, and a strong wind blew. The dust was awful, but safer than the sun.

We went through the Khyber on a closed day, which, I found afterwards, is illegal. The chief of the Khyber Pathans had been a friend of the Armenian's father, and he ordered out the guard of the Pass for us, so that we could travel on instead of waiting two or three days. At Jumrood, the end of the Pass, we were stopped by the order of the British Frontier Officer, and I heard that, if I had been in the service of the Government, I should have been liable to imprisonment in the fort for travelling on the wrong day. However, we were allowed to proceed.

In Peshawur I got rid of my horses : tipped my Afghan guard, and took the train to Simla to deliver a Despatch to His Excellency the Viceroy that His Highness the Amîr had entrusted me with.

The despatch contained nothing political, but simply concerned me personally. The Foreign Secretary kindly gave me a translation of it. This is how it runs :—

(Copy.) "FOREIGN OFFICE, INDIA.

"Translation of a letter from His Highness the Amîr of Afghanistan and its Dependencies to the address of His Excellency the Viceroy, dated the 24th of Showal, 1308 H., corresponding to the 2nd of June, 1891.

"After compliments.

"I have the honour to inform your Excellency that Dr. John Gray has asked me for some months' leave in view to proceed to England and celebrate his marriage, and, after settling his own domestic affairs, to return to me.

"I have, therefore, given him eight months' leave, and it has been settled with him that he should come back to Kabul at the appointed time.

"This has been written only for your Excellency's information, so that your Excellency may be aware of the circumstance and the manner of leave of Dr. Gray. Of course, he will do everything which he thinks necessary for his domestic affairs during the period of his leave, and, having satisfied himself, he will, at the approach of the appointed period, start to come to Kabul in a happy and hopeful state of mind."

It will be unnecessary to give details of the gay time we had in Simla. Colonel Wali Ahmad Khan, the Amîr's Agent with the Government of India, had received orders from the Amîr to invite me to the bungalow that the Government had placed at his disposal. I stayed with him, therefore, taking the Armenian and my Indian cook. I had my formal interview with the Viceroy, dined with His Excellency: went to several dances at the Viceregal Lodge: was introduced to Lord Roberts, Lord William Beresford, the Quartermaster-General, and other gentlemen: went to numerous dinners, and, after a fortnight's gaiety, departed for Bombay, where, accompanied by the Armenian, I took ship for London.

In India I had been struck by the remarkable whiteness of an Englishman's skin: in London I thought I knew every second man I met. However, I soon came to the conclusion that it must be the *type* I was familiar with, not the individual.

The next thing that appealed to me, after I had got over the strangeness of seeing "Sahibs" drive cabs, heave baggage about, and take "tips," was the

quaint irregularity of an Englishman's features: I do not remember noticing that English ladies appeared in the same light: on the contrary,—and the Armenian agreed with me.

I think the study of character and the endeavouring to form conclusions as to the course of action that will probably be taken up by any given individual under different circumstances, is one of the most fascinating of studies. Here was a case at hand, under my own eye, as it were.

I had studied the Armenian for a couple of years or so and had come to conclusions. I knew what he would do, and I would watch the development of his character under the altered circumstances of life in England. I would observe the enlargement of his mind as I gradually fed it with greater and greater wonders.

In India I had thought I would spare him as much as possible on the journey, lest he became bewildered by the traffic and the bustle of the railway, but, somehow, it did not seem to be necessary.

He bought a satchel, slung it over his shoulder, asked for the money—which he kept—took my ticket; paid the hotel bills; looked after my baggage; chose the best seat in the railway carriage for me; bullied other people's servants if they tried to take the seat for their masters,—I heard one man, a Civil Service official, say, "I fancy the Amîr in all his glory must be coming down in this train"—and altogether he behaved as if he knew all about it. However, I thought, when we get to the sea and the great floating Hotel, the P. and O. boat, the education will begin. He will be astonished. Perhaps

he was, but I did not see it. He took everything as a matter of course ; apparently he knew it all before; doubtless in some other cycle of existence. He wasn't even sea-sick.

London, with its thousands, its grandeur, its turmoil of business, this will take him aback : the wonder of it must needs appal him.

Appal ! He hadn't been in London a fortnight before he could tell me what 'bus to take and what the fare was. He knew all about the "Inner and Outer Circles," which is more than I do ; and before long could give an opinion on the relative merits of a considerable number of the music halls and theatres in the Metropolis.

It was I who was bewildered, not he. What manner of man is this, I thought ; will nothing astonish him ?

I got orders from the Government for him to visit the Mint, Woolwich Arsenal, and other places, and he compared them to similar establishments in Afghanistan, to the disparagement of the English ones ! I took him to Whiteley's, saying, in a casual way, "This is an English shop." He took it quietly, but before he left he had accepted an invitation to a banquet at the Metropôle that the employées at that establishment were giving. Moreover, at the dinner he got up and made a fluent speech !

At my wedding he created a great sensation. He appeared before us on that occasion in Afghan costume, and attracted, next to the bride, by far the greatest amount of attention : *I* was a necessary, but unnoticeable appendage : a sort of after-thought;

and all the little girls fell in love with him. After the ceremony he came into the Vestry and signed his name, in Persian, in the Register as witness. He said it was Persian, but it was hard to tell. He explained the peculiarity of his writing by stating that a warrior is not a clerk.

It came though—the wonder and the awe: and I look back with pride upon that day.

I took him to the Crystal Palace and showed him the display of fireworks at Brock's benefit.

"Is this anything?" I asked, feebly and almost in despair. He admitted it: "Yes!" he said,—this was really fine: even his father had never seen anything like it.

It was *my* education that was being completed, my mind that was developing, and as I sat and looked at the Oriental, I felt that perhaps this great London was, after all, *not* the "hub of the Universe." I was bewildered. What was the "hub"? Was it Kabul?

When my leave drew to a close, I bade adieu to my little wife, and sailed for Bombay. It was as well for the Armenian that we went, for, somehow, he seemed almost a wreck when we got on board. I said as much to him, and he accounted for his condition by saying that the climate of England was too strong for him.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE WELCOME TO KABUL

Pathan rifle thieves. Dacca. The midnight alarm: the mêlée: the accident: rescued. "Bally rascals:" attempted explanation. The next morning. What it was all about. The terror of the Amîr's name. Running postmen. Kabul post. Arrival. Armenian's opinion of London. Changes in the English "staff." Visitors: letters. Lady doctor's application. Salaam to the Amîr. His Highness's welcome: his conversation. The military Durbar. Presents. The new British Agent. Visit to the Sultana. Salaam to Prince Habibullah. His conversation. Another visit to the Amîr: his appreciation of scenic effect. His answer to the lady doctor's application.

At Peshawur I found a very kind letter from His Highness waiting for me, with an order for as many horses as I needed. The guard were to meet me at Lundi Kotal Serai.

I will not trace the journey in detail, though one incident that occurred may be worth relating, showing as it does what miracles may be worked by the magic of the Amîr's name. I had some English firearms with me—a couple of rifles and a shot gun—packed in cases, which I wished to present to the Amîr, and when we reached Dacca the Armenian was considerably disturbed in his mind concerning the safety of these weapons. The neighbouring Pathans, he said, were exceedingly clever thieves, and they had a curious passion for English rifles.

In the evening he told me several interesting stories, laughable in their cleverness, of the way in

which these Pathans managed to obtain from Peshawur weapons of English manufacture.

The tents had been put up facing the river on the edge of the high bank, in order to catch as much breeze as possible. The Armenian's tent was just at a corner where a nullah or dry water-course cut the bank ; mine was next. The nullah was perhaps twelve feet deep, and the bank of the river some twenty feet above the surface of the water.

I turned in about ten o'clock and slept soundly till about midnight, when I was awakened suddenly by the sound of a scuffle. Instantly it occurred to me, " the Shenwarris are after my guns."

I threw a cloak round me and stepped out of the tent. It was very dark, but there appeared to be a free fight going on. I could dimly make out a body of men struggling, could hear the thuds of blows and the Armenian's voluminous voice roaring in manifest rage. There were no reports of firearms, but it occurred to me as an advisable precaution to be possessed of a revolver before entering the *mêlée*. Mine, a heavy one, had been carried by the Armenian the day before, and since he was not using it I concluded it must be in his tent. Hastily, therefore, so as not to be out of the fun, I made for his tent. Remembering the high bank and the rapid river below, I groped round the back of the tent, stumbling over the ropes, until—down I went. I had forgotten all about the nullah. Instinctively throwing out a hand, I caught a tent-peg. It cracked dangerously at the sudden jerk, and for a moment I was hanging over the edge at arm's length on this rickety concern ; then I found my feet resting on a ledge. I was very annoyed

at being so entirely shelved, and was considering how I could get out of the position with dignity and honour, when I heard the sound of someone running and the Armenian's voice calling,

"Sir! Sir! Where are you?"

I answered, as it were, from the bowels of the earth, and when he had localized my whereabouts he hauled me up. I had to leave my dignity behind. He said—

"Sir, please, you go back, you not trouble: *I* manage these bally rascal: these dogs' sons. A little I afraid you get hurt."

Of course, I was not going back to my tent until I knew what the row was all about.

A light was brought. The Colonel commanding the station, and a crowd of people, all more or less excited, were to be seen. They pulled out a charpoy from one of the tents for me to sit on, and tea was brought—why, I don't know. When we had drank tea everyone began to explain at once: the Colonel in Persian; the soldiers in Pushtu; and the Armenian in involved English. The Colonel and the soldiers spoke very fast and loudly, constantly interrupting one another, and I caught only a word here and there. What the Armenian wished to express I could not imagine. A man was then brought forward with his arms bound behind his back.

The Colonel and the Armenian seemed much disturbed that I had fallen down the nullah, but what the explanation of the bound man was I could not make out: only this, that he was *not* a thief after my rifles. I went to bed again.

In the morning, after breakfast, when everyone

had cooled down, I heard the explanation. The Colonel, it seems, had stationed the guard. All went quietly for a time until the Armenian, before he turned in, made a round of the sentries. He found one point improperly guarded, and ordered one of the soldiers to move his position. The man refused with a Pushtu oath : and high words followed. In this the soldier was no match for the Armenian, and being exasperated at receiving harder words than he could return, he endeavoured to stab his bayonet into the latter.

Such a line of action not meeting the Armenian's views as to the eternal fitness of things, he closed with the soldier. His "education" in England had not been without effect, and scorning to use a knife, like a native, he proceeded to punch the soldier's head. The magnetic effect of a "fight" caused other people to run up, and the thuds and scuffle of the *mêlée* aroused me.

After the explanation, the unfortunate man, with his hands bound, was brought forward, and the Colonel begged me to pronounce sentence upon him. He said he would carry out any punishment I chose to impose ; whether of fine, imprisonment, or death. He offered me his revolver, that I might have the supreme delight of killing the man myself ; or, if that did not meet my views, he would himself shoot him at once. All this excessive politeness arose from the fact that I expressed to the Colonel my sense of dissatisfaction that a distinguished foreigner could not travel through his district without being exposed to annoyances of this kind. I asked whether he thought Amîr Sahib would be satisfied

with his administrative power. At the mention of His Highness's name, the Colonel became greatly disturbed in his mind, and desired me to look upon himself as my dog. I said that I was not in need of a dog just then, and that these words did not please me. As for judging the man, I was not a magistrate in the country, how could I take upon myself to judge him. With a damp forehead and a dry tongue he begged me, as a friend to the poor, not to report the matter.

I began gradually to be appeased, to soften the severe aspect of the countenance, and unbend the knitted brow, for, as I have frequently remarked, I am a mild man. The Colonel perceiving his advantage ordered tea to be brought instantly, and waited upon me with both hands. "Slowly by slowly" the threatened storm blew off, and the Colonel, with joy in his heart, accompanied us miles on the journey, telling many yarns and amusing stories, whereat we laughed. We are now great friends—he and I: for had I not stood by him in an hour of trouble, when his heart melted within him, and his interiors were as water!

Riding along we met one of the "running postmen": a tall, gaunt hillman without an ounce of superfluous fat on him. These men run for a certain number of miles with a sealed leather post satchel, and then pass it on to the next. There are rough sheds by the wayside where each remains till his turn comes. They carry a long bamboo lance tipped and shod with steel, and with a small bell fixed just below the blade. The post for India leaves Kabul on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and that from India arrives on Sundays and Thursdays.

At the stage before Kabul I had received a letter from His Highness directing me to take possession of the house I formerly occupied in the town : to rest for a day ; and on the following day to come on to Endekki, when he would receive me.

We arrived at Kabul on a Sunday morning, in March, 1892. It was a proud day for the Armenian as he rode through the bazaar with his solar helmet on one side—no miserable native turban for him now. His hand was on his hip and his elbow pointed outwards : his uplifted head desired to strike the stars. With a lofty pity, not unmingled with contempt, he gazed around at the admiring faces of the salaaming Kabulis. Was he not a traveller of renown : one who had crossed the great river and penetrated to the very heart of the Feringhi country !

Mr. Walter, the tailor, rode out to meet us ; he said to the Armenian :

"Well, did you like London ?"

"Sir, what *d'you* think ! But London is very good place for rich man, very bad place for poor man. Kabul is good for poor man."

"What did you do in London ?" asked Mr. Walter.

"O, Sir ! A little I walk this way and that, and upon ladies I pinch eyes."

By this I fancy he must have meant he winked. It was a revelation to me, and I looked at him severely. What other remarkable development might I not detect !

I heard from Mr. Walter that the two engineers, Messrs. Stewart and Myddleton, had departed, and their places were taken by two Scotchmen. Mr.

Pyne had gone to England on leave and had not yet returned. He was to bring out several other Englishmen.

The Armenian had the house swept out, the carpets down, and everything straight in a very short time. Several people called in the afternoon. Some of the Armenian's relatives: the Compounder; and some Afghans whom I knew. I found half-a-dozen letters waiting for me, one from my wife, whereat I rejoiced, and one from a lady missionary in India who wished to enter the Amîr's service as medical attendant upon the Harem.

I had met another lady in Peshawur who also wished to enter the Amîr's service. She was attached to the Afghan Mission in that town, and spoke Persian, Pushtu, and Hindustani, and had had some medical training. She told me she was intending to travel to Kabul, in disguise, with the Koffla, the travelling merchants. She was young, and I endeavoured to point out some of the dangers she would be exposed to from Afghan ruffians, and did my best to dissuade her from such a rash undertaking. It seemed to me the conception was an utterly mad one, but that if she desired greatly to enter the service the best thing would be to write and apply to His Highness. However, she did not write that I know of.

The other lady missionary who wrote was much older, and in due time I had her letter translated and laid before His Highness. How the Amîr received the application I will relate presently.

The day after our arrival I rode to the Endekki Palace to salaam the Amîr. In the great hall I met many of the Court whom I knew, and chatted with

them. As soon as His Highness rose I was called to the inner room.

I found His Highness seated on a couch of crimson and gold. He was dressed in a black morning suit, with an ordinary English shirt and collar: he looked very European, and his hands, on which were some beautiful rings, struck me as being singularly white. He had picked up wonderfully since June, when I saw him last, was nothing like so thin, and looked exceedingly well. The room had the appearance of a lady's boudoir, with flowers, vases, embroideries, piano, and so on.

I bowed as I entered the room, and His Highness smiled and beckoned me forwards. He held my hand some minutes while he made kindly enquiries as to my health; and he asked was my wife well, and the other members of my family.

He said he was exceedingly pleased to see me again, and he thanked God that I had returned safely. He then allowed me to be seated.

He enquired the date of my wedding, and on hearing that my married life had lasted only for three months and a half, he said: "How sorrowful your wife must be, how sorrowful she must be." Presently he said—

"I will grant you leave of absence again soon; you shall go to your home when the winter comes."

He promised, with great kindness, that every preparation should be made for the reception of Mrs. Gray in Kabul, and desired her to be accompanied by two English maidservants, whose salaries he would charge himself with. When she felt a longing to return to England she should go: if, however, she

did not care to accompany me back to Kabul, he would from time to time give me leave of absence at short intervals. As regards transmitting pay, he said he would order any proportion of my salary that I wished, to be paid either in London or to my bankers in Bombay.

He told me that both coal and iron had been found in the country, and he said that it was his intention soon to visit England himself. He referred to the death of Prince Albert Victor, and spoke highly of him, and I remember he told me an anecdote in the life of the Prince. He spoke some little time on other matters, and then tea and cigarettes were brought. There had been no one in the room with His Highness during the interview, except myself, the Armenian, and one of the Page boys. After being with His Highness four or five hours, I asked permission to withdraw, and then visited Malek, the Page, who was ill. He seemed very pleased to see me.

The next day, Tuesday, was a military Durbar, and I visited His Highness again, taking with me the rifles I had brought, as I wished to present them to him. His Highness received me kindly, and accepted the present I laid before him. I had also brought for Prince Habibullah a plumed helmet, such as an officer in India would wear. The Prince was at the Durbar, and His Highness, after examining the helmet, kindly allowed me to present it to the Prince.

There were a great many of the Afghan military officers present: they were seated along the side of the room, and among them was the new British Agent, the Sirdar Mahomed Afzal Khan. The former

agent, Colonel Attaullah Khan, having been long a resident at the Amîr's Court, had withdrawn. Lunch was served, and at five o'clock I came away.

The next day the fast of Ramazàn commenced, and I got to work at the Hospital.

A few days afterwards I rode out to the country house where Her Highness, the Sultana, was living, and sent in my salaams with a present of silks and so on that I had brought for her and the little Prince Mahomed Omer. A kind message was received in reply, and after the usual tea, cigarettes, and sweets, I rode back to Kabul.

A day or two afterwards, I paid a formal visit to Prince Habibullah. He was living in the bungalow of the Bâbur Gardens.

It was a pretty garden with fountains, flowers and trees, situated on the slope of the mountains outside Kabul, in a sort of natural concavity in the hills.

The Prince received me most kindly, and talked for some time, asking me many questions about London. He desired me also to paint another portrait of himself; which, by the way, I never had the opportunity of doing.

One afternoon in the next week I again visited His Highness the Amîr, taking with me the letter of the lady missionary who desired to enter the Amîr's service.

While I was waiting in the great hall, smoking cigarettes, my old friend, General Nassir Khan, came and chatted with me, saying how pleased he was to see me back again. Another friend also came and spoke

to me, the Brigadier Hadji Gul Khan. I do not know if he was as pleased to see me as the General, for he had been living in my house while I was in London, and had to turn out when I came back; however, he expressed himself as delighted.

It was late in the afternoon when I arrived at the Palace, and when I was called in to the Amîr the dusk of the evening had fallen. As soon as I entered the room, His Highness called my attention to a most picturesque evening effect that could be seen from his window. A brilliant gleam of light appeared between the clouds in the sky, the mountains could be seen shadowy but distinct; the middle ground was in deep shadow, and in the foreground were the Palace gardens and fountains lit by the light from the Palace.

His Highness read the translation of the lady missionary's letter, and said, that at present the country was too unsettled in condition for it to be a suitable field for the efforts of an English lady doctor. When, however, Mrs. Gray accompanied me to Kabul, the lady might travel with her. His Highness spoke some time, and told me that in future, when I wished to see him, there was no need for me to write and make an appointment: he would receive me at any time, day or night. I got home at nine o'clock in the evening and wrote to the lady missionary, telling her as nearly as I could His Highness's words. Mrs. Gray never went to Kabul, nor I believe did the lady missionary.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CHOLERA

Ramazàn. The outbreak of Cholera. Precautions. Notices in the bazaars. Rapid spread. European medicine. The overwhelming dread. Processions to the Mosque. Oriental fatalism. Exodus of the Court. The shadow of death. Cases. Removal of the Court to the mountains. Closure of the Workshops. The Armenian as an Inspector. The Prince's chamberlain. Death of the Dabier-ul-Mulk. The mortality. An incident. Afghan appreciation of British motives. Arrival of an Englishman with thoroughbred horses. Dying out of the Cholera. Visit to Paghman. The soldiers in chains: their iniquities. Anger of the Amîr: his decision: the choice. An earthquake: the Amîr as a scientist. Illness of the "Keeper of the Carpets." Arrival of Mr. Pyne and other Englishmen. Another visit to the Amîr. His Highness's description of a Royal illness: the cure: the comment, and the other patient. Dinner from the Palace: the sealed dishes.

Four days after this was Good Friday, April 15th, and three cases of cholera occurred in the town. It was "Ramazàn," when good Mahomedans fast all day and eat enormously at night. Knowing as I did something of the careless nature of Asiatics: of the awful condition, sanitarily speaking, of the town of Kabul: of the insufficiency and impurity of the water supply: it seemed to me that the disease *must* spread with deadly rapidity.

The conjecture was only too correct.

The Europeans in Kabul readily understanding the serious condition of affairs, were easily induced to take suitable precautions, such as the avoidance of fruit and uncooked vegetables; the drinking of water only after it had been boiled and filtered; and the

careful abstention from any kind of excess in either eating or drinking.

For the natives, I ordered to be posted about in the bazaars, notices in Persian advising similar precautions ; and described a simple filter in which after water had been boiled it could be run through sand and charcoal ; for sand and charcoal were both of them to be easily obtained in the town. I sent an inspector —my Burma policeman—with a band of soldiers to examine if the city scavengers did their duty, and to order the removal from the town of all filth that they could get access to. I brought forth all the barrels of disinfectant powder that the Hospital contained, but which was of necessity pitiably insufficient, and ordered its free use in all suspicious places.

At first, cases among the soldiers were reported to me, and I attempted isolation : but soon this was utterly impossible, for the men fell in numbers that increased alarmingly day by day. In the town the disease, as is usual with cholera, was most erratic in its onslaughts. I endeavoured to institute the reporting of cases to me as soon as they arose, but it was a useless attempt, and scores died before I even heard of them. Two days after the commencement, namely, on April 17th, it was reported that between six a.m. and six p.m. there were a hundred and eighty-five corpses carried out of Kabul for burial. The number of deaths was, I heard, reported daily to His Highness, though to me this was of less importance than the daily number of fresh cases. The sick soon ceased calling for Hakims, and their friends came in increasing crowds to my house for European medicines.

I gave them pills containing opium and acetate of lead, to be taken at certain intervals, to the number of three. No food nor drink was to be taken ; but to allay the intense thirst the patient might suck ice. For the severe abdominal pain mustard poultices, and for the agonizing cramps in the limbs massage, were to be employed. This was the general treatment, varied of course for special cases and complications.

Day by day the great shadow deepened over the city. A sickening dread was in the heart of each ; for who might not be the next victim ? Men gathered together and cheered themselves with forced gaiety, and bhang, or sat with terror-stricken faces waiting for death. Wailing was in every house, and one could not ride ten yards without meeting parties of mourners carrying out fresh victims to the graveyard.

" The cholera is in the air," they said.

The Amîr ordered processions to march to the Mosques with banners and music and pray for deliverance. Can one believe it ? but such was the paralysing effect of " Kismet," or of terror, in the town, that the men were driven to the Mosques with sticks by the soldiers ere they would move.

With the fatalism of their nature it was not to be hoped that they would take the precautions to avoid infection—ordinary and simple though they were—that I had pointed out.

The bodies of the dead were washed in the Kabul river, from which most of the drinking water of the town was obtained ! They were carried through the gorge by the river-side and buried near the road at the foot of the Asmai Mountain.

If a man were thirsty he drank whatever water was at hand : out of an irrigation ditch fouled with wayside filth, from a polluted well, or the Kabul river. So far from avoiding fruit and vegetables the townspeople ate of them largely.

When men dropped down in the Durbar, and the Palace attendants were seized, the Amîr and the Court moved from Endekki to Rish Khor, in the direction of the Paghman Hills.

As I was needed among the sick, His Highness did not withdraw me from the town. I was living between Chandawal and the gardens around Timur's Tomb, and soon the cholera spread its wings over us. The houses near me were made desolate, and one of my servants lay dying in the garden.

This man was an Afghan hillman, a good fellow, cheery, and really, it seemed to me, honest. No one told me when he was first taken, for he said—

"Why should the Doctor Sahib be troubled for such as I, he has enough work with others."

The next day when the pains and the cramps came on, one of the servants reported the matter to me. I went to the man at once, but it was too late ; he was collapsed, with sunken eyes, his nose was peaky and blue, the skin of his body cold and his hands shrivelled. I looked at the other servants and asked why I was not told of this before.

None of them answered. The man seemed grateful that I had seen him, but he died in the night.

I visited a good many of their houses. It would have been absurd to wait for an order from the Amîr at a time such as this ; sometimes I took the

Armenian to translate, at other times I went alone, for I knew enough Persian to get along with. My guard—often a single or a couple of soldiers—waited outside the house while I went in. A guard was really superfluous, for no one was likely to hurt me : on the contrary, I was welcomed with every sign of gratitude.

As regards the form of treatment I had adopted, I found it successful in a great many cases, though the proportion of those who recovered, compared with the number of deaths in the town, was doubtless excessively small. Hundreds, however, took the medicine whom I never saw. Some would carry out the instructions I gave them to the letter, others would take the medicine but consult their friends as to the instructions. These cases did not do so well, and I ceased attending where I was not obeyed.

On the 21st of April, the cholera spread to Rish Khor, and there was an exodus of the Court to the Paghman Mountains. Here the water was good, tumbling down in many little cascades from the hills. One day I was seized with vomiting and was ill, and the Amîr hearing of it sent to enquire how I was. Happily by the time the messenger arrived I was better. Soon the road between Paghman and the infected city was closed, and sentries were posted to cut off all communication.

In the Arm Foundry the native workmen dropped down at the benches, and work was stopped for want of men to do it.

I was called to see one of the storekeepers of the foundry, Gholam Nuksh Ban, who was seized. I had hopes for him, and the second day he was

better. After that he ceased following the instructions I gave, and took the advice of Hakims and friends. I found him drinking curds and whey, and large quantities of water: I left him therefore. Vomiting returned with excessive violence and he died. Before he died, however, he gave into my hands a magazine rifle that I had bought for the Amîr in London, but which had been detained at the Frontier and afterwards sent on.

The Armenian went the round of the bazaars to inspect the food sold. He was not a skilled inspector, but he could at least distinguish rancid butter, sour milk, putrid meat, or decomposing vegetables, when he saw them.

At this time the Hazaras broke out in rebellion, and the locusts invaded Kabul again. The latter, wise creatures, did not stay; they passed on.

I received an order to attend one of the Chamberlains of Prince Habibullah, and I went to his house. To see a stranger in the grip of cholera is bad; but to see a man you know, is a horror that catches you in the throat. There were the shrunken features and ashy-grey face of a dreadful ghost of the man I knew. I tried hard to save this man's life. Visiting him time after time, I made his men do as I said. The look in the eyes of a man when he greets you, feeling the dread phantom loosening its hold and his life coming back to him, is a thing to remember.

The Dabier-ul-Mulk, Chief Secretary to the Amîr, and the man, I suppose, most trusted by His Highness, was seized. I was sorry I received no order to attend him. He died.

Of the four Englishmen who were in Kabul at the

onset of the disease none were ill—with the exception of my own slight attack.

At the end of six weeks the cholera lessened in severity in the town and spread more in the surrounding villages. It returned, however, again and again, and the mortality was excessive. By the beginning of June I was informed that eleven thousand deaths had been reported to His Highness in Kabul and its neighbourhood.

Among other stories I heard at the time was one of a man falling and dying just outside the town, near the execution ground. The body was not seen till the following morning, when a man riding by saw the pariah dogs that prowl in that neighbourhood snarling and worrying over something.

Another story, less hideous and perhaps more interesting was this: A man coming up to a group standing in the street said—

"A relative of mine is ill with this disease."

Said one of the group—

"Why go you not at once to the English Doctor? he is giving medicine."

"Nay," answered the man, "the British Government sent him here to poison as many as he can."

"Khair," said a third, "not so. To my wife, ill with this disease, he gave a medicine: she is now well."

"Beshak," said a fourth. "Undoubtedly; but the Sirkar-i-Engrez send him that by curing us he may gain our friendship. Thus they hope to draw away the people and the country from Amîr Sahib, that they may come themselves and rule us."

Meanwhile another Englishman, Mr. Clemence, had arrived. He brought with him from England

two or three thoroughbred stallions and some hackneys, for the improvement of the Amîr's stud. He had, however, been directed to make a detour and avoid Kabul, and had been conducted to Faizabad, where he took up his quarters. Shortly afterwards he rode into Kabul to visit the other Englishmen : a woeful time to arrive in a strange town.

About the middle of June we had violent thunder storms and heavy rain, a most unusual occurrence at that time of the year, and the weather became cool, much cooler than it was in April.

The cholera now appeared to be dying out, and men began to draw their breath again and to recover from the oppressive dread. I wrote to His Highness and enquired his health. He replied that he was well, and invited me to visit him at Paghman.

It is a beautiful ride of about fifteen miles. First there is the Chahardeh Valley, with cornfields, hedges, and gardens ; then the incline at the foot of the mountains ; the Paghman Valley, and a last steep climb to the Royal residence.

It was very cool at Paghman ; there were trees, flowers, and waterfalls, but the corn instead of being ripe was green. Almost directly we arrived at the Palace I was shown into the room where His Highness was sitting, and he greeted me most kindly. He referred to the cholera, and reminded me that I had told him at my last interview how very little sickness there was, so that Doctors and Hakims had very little to do.

Tea and cigarettes were brought, and His Highness directed the Pages to offer me the cakes and biscuits that were brought for his own breakfast.

By and by there were some soldiers brought in, in chains. His Highness called my attention to them, and told me the story of their offences.

It was quite a long story. They had formed a conspiracy against their Captain, whom they had accused of oppression and other evils. His Highness dilated at some length upon their iniquities, and finally said—

"What can one do with such men?"

They threw themselves on the ground, crying—

"Tobah! tobah!"—"Alas! alas!"

The Amîr said—

"Nay! the time is past for 'tobah.' You have admitted before the Priest that the accusation you made against your officer was false."

One began to say that he was "Amîr Sahib's servant."

"What word is this?" thundered the Amîr, "my servant!! This General is my servant, this man and this (the Treasury Officer and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief), these are my servants. You? You are the dog of my servants!"

"What shall I do to you?" he said, as they stood quaking. Then he added,

"You shall be taken from here to a room apart, there shall you sit and debate among yourselves what your punishment shall be, and to-morrow you shall again be brought before me."

Then they were hurried away.

What the choice of each one was I do not know, but I had occasion to learn the choice of some of them. A few days afterwards on visiting the Sherpur Hospital I saw four or five of the men. They each

greeted me with a wan smile and held up the left arm —the hand had been severed at the wrist joint.

His Highness then continued talking to me concerning the causes of cholera, and he ordered a specimen of Paghman drinking water to be brought. While I was examining it, the windows commenced rattling, and I thought vaguely that the wind must have risen very suddenly. Hearing a bustle I looked up and saw the Pages hurrying together and the Amîr standing. I jumped up at once. A moment or two afterwards His Highness sat down again, motioning me to do the same. He said—

"Did you not recognize the cause of that noise?"

"No, Sir," I answered, "I thought it was the wind."

He laughed and said—

"It was an earthquake! Another time you must be quicker and get out of the house." He said that the motion of the earth in an earthquake, at any given spot, was in a vertical, not a horizontal direction. Were it in a horizontal direction, he said, the very mountains would fall. Being in a vertical direction the pressure on the beams of a house, owing to the weight of the roof, becomes excessive, and they are likely to give way. For this reason it is advisable to get out into the open when an earthquake commences.

Soon after this His Highness wrote a few words on a slip of paper, and calling the Armenian to him he handed him the paper. When the Armenian returned to me he whispered that the Amîr had increased my pay considerably. I commenced to thank His Highness, but he smiled, and silenced me by raising his hand.

About four o'clock, dinner was brought. For me

a European one was provided, the only peculiarity of which was that the soup followed the fish.

After dinner, His Highness asked me if I was returning to Kabul that night, or whether I would remain at Paghman till the morning. As I had six horses with me I decided to return. His Highness asked me before I left to visit the "Ferrash-bashi," or "Keeper of the Carpets," who was ill. This was the gentleman I met first in Turkestan, who struck me as being "not such a villain as he looked."

Accordingly, I called upon him at his house in Paghman, which was some distance down the hill.

I found he had had a stroke, and was paralyzed on one side. I gave him advice, and said I would ride over in a day or two to see him again. Night came on as we were riding home, and we had to do the last two or three miles at a walk.

At this time Mr. Pyne was on his way back to Kabul after the termination of his leave: and two days after my visit to Paghman he arrived in the town, bringing with him Mr. Arthur Collins, who had entered the service as geologist. Being well mounted they had ridden the last two stages in a day, arriving in Kabul in the evening. Coming so quickly they were ahead of their baggage, and had had nothing to eat since the early morning. A dinner was soon provided, and I sent them plates, knives, and forks; and blankets for the night.

Several other Englishmen had entered the service, who arrived the next day with the baggage. There were two more assistant engineers; a mining assistant to Mr. Collins; a gardener, and a lapidary. The last did not stay long, as it was

found that the native lapidaries could do ordinary work; and extraordinary work, such as the Amîr hoped for, was, I understood, only possible with special machinery. About a month afterwards two other Englishmen arrived, a tanner and a currier from Yorkshire: so that at this time there were no less than fourteen Englishmen in Kabul.

The day after the arrival of the Englishmen I rode over to Paghman again to see the Ferrash-bashi. Mr. Walter, the tailor, who wished to try a coat on the little Prince Mahomed Omer, accompanied me. I found my patient no worse, and after lunching off some delicious Paghman cherries I went on to the Palace to salaam His Highness.

After salutations, tea, and cigarettes, His Highness told me the story of a severe illness he suffered from when he was a youth. He was a general in his father's army, and was so ill that he had to be carried to the wars on a charpoy. He was hoisted on to men's shoulders, or on to a house top, or hill, to see the battles. The Hakims told him that the illness he suffered from was due to the presence of a large worm or snake in his stomach. Medicine after medicine was used without avail: and large quantities of iced water were drunk with the intention of chilling the creature and driving it out. This being unsuccessful an idea struck the Amîr: he abstained from food for many hours, and then ordered to be prepared a very delicious and savoury dinner, and he sat with this in front of him hoping to tempt the worm. It was successful, and feeling the creature crawling up his throat he waited; then seizing the head he drew it forth.

"Thus did I succeed in getting rid of the vile creature," said the Amîr, and, suiting the action to the word, he appeared to be drawing a rope from his mouth, hand over hand.

In a serious and profoundly interesting account of a Royal illness and cure, it was exceedingly improper for me to be affected by the humorous side of the narrative; but, try as I would to prevent it, a shadow of a smile appeared. His Highness noticing it looked very straight at me and said—

"I tell you this for your own guidance. I have here a man suffering from the same disease. Him I desire you to examine. Administer such medicines as you deem suitable, giving also due weight to the narrative I have related of my own sufferings and cure, that thus his recovery may be ensured."

I found that the patient was suffering from a disease that was, perhaps, less interesting than that His Highness suffered from: he had cancer of the stomach. I am sorry to say I was of necessity less successful in treating him than His Highness had been in treating himself.

After some further talk with His Highness, I retired and rode back to the Ferrash-bashi's. It seems that the last time I had gone to see His Highness, he had ordered tents and dinner to be brought for me to the patient's house: they arrived about half-an-hour after we had left. This time, therefore, we stayed. The tents were put up on the grass in the cherry orchard: a couch, covered with yellow and purple silk, was brought from the Palace and dinner arrived. The dishes had been taken before His Highness for approval: the tray

was then covered with a white cloth and sealed before him. I was informed of the arrival of dinner: the seal was broken in my presence; and the dishes made hot at a fire on the grass outside my tent. I dined: then after more cherries and a smoke, I retired to my gorgeous couch, well-pleased with myself and everybody else.

The next morning, after breakfast, we rode back to Kabul. I was going down the long slope from the Paghman Hills at a smart trot, when I heard a sudden exclamation, and looking back, saw the Armenian and his horse go headlong: he was riding the brute of mine that stumbled. I shouted to a soldier to catch my bridle, and sprang off to see what the damage was, for the horse had rolled over the Armenian's leg. He was crushed and bruised a good deal, and the skin scraped off his leg, but there were no breakages. He had, however, a bump on his head big enough for all practical purposes. We sat for a little by the wayside till he had recovered, then he got on another horse, and we went the rest of the way at a walk.

After dinner, I luxuriated in a long chair opposite the window. The view was the sky and an apple-tree laden with fruit: beyond were vines, apricot, and almond trees; in the distance over the tree-tops was the purple and shadowy summit of a mountain. The doves were coo-cooing, and the sparrows chirping. Later, the moon came out and the hoopoe cried "Hood-hood."

CHAPTER XXX

ANOTHER WINTER

A political Durbar: tact of the Amîr: a friendly soldier. The banquet. Return of the Cholera. Essay on "Precautionary measures": its fate. Health of the English in Kabul. Serious illness of the gardener: lying rumours. Report to the Amîr: His Highness's kindness. Visit to Prince Nasrullah: a "worm-eaten" tooth: the consultation: the operation: the present: effect of example. Erring Englishmen: the Amîr's remedy. Amîr as a chess-player: the unhappy Courtier. The far-sighted Armenian: winter quarters. End of the Cholera. Invasion of Small-pox and Erysipelas. To Paghman: Portrait of Prince Mahomed Omer: present from the Sultana. The sketch of the Prince: his amusement: resemblance to the Amîr: his costume: arrangement of the group. Present of a slave-boy: embarrassment. A lesson in courtesy to the Page boys. Native dinners. Visit of Mr. Pyne: the sandali. Completion of the portrait. Kept waiting at the door: the "Gnat." The Amîr's remark. Sultana's gift to the Paghmanis: Afghan mode of slaughtering: cogitations. Ride to Kabul: the mud. Money bothers: the Afghan Agent: the "Gnat." Sent for to the Palace: a Landscape Commission: postponement of leave: disappointment: the Amîr's remedy: gratification and pride. Christmas dinner at the shops. The "Health of Her Majesty."

A WEEK after this, July 4th, was the festival of Îd, and in the morning I rode with the Armenian to Paghman to salaam His Highness. The other Englishmen followed later in the day. We arrived about eleven a.m. The review of troops and prayers were finished, and His Highness had just taken his seat in the Durbar Hall. I was admitted at once into the presence, and bowing said, through the Armenian, that I wished His Highness all happiness. A chair was then ordered to be placed for me in a bay window: it was not so near His Highness as

usual, and I was wondering why, when the Armenian whispered—

"It is a Durbar of Chiefs and Maleks."

Presently the hall began to fill, but His Highness allowed no one to be placed between himself and me, and even ordered a vase of flowers on the table in front of him to be moved so that he could see me distinctly.

The visitors were army officers and Chiefs from all parts of the country; Turkomans, Hazaras, and Afghans. I rather wished myself out of it, fearing that my visit had been inopportune.

At the end of the room in an arm-chair by an open window sat His Highness. Outside were the guard and a crowd of some hundreds of people. In a chair on the Amîr's left, and at some little distance, sat Prince Habibullah: he was attired in a scarlet uniform with plumed helmet. Everyone else sat on the ground. On His Highness's right were Prince Nasrullah, Sirdar Usuf, the Amîr's uncle, and the British Agent: then came the principal military officers; and all round the room the Chiefs and Maleks.

Seeing the British Agent I was relieved, feeling sure that, after all, my visit was not an intrusion. I could not but admire His Highness's tact in the way in which, having allowed me to be present unofficially in a State Durbar, he considered the European feeling of dignity in allowing me a chair with no one between himself and me; and considered also the jealous pride of the Afghans in placing me in the window, and, as it were, outside the circle.

His Highness addressed his audience for some

little time, chiefly in Pushtu but partly in Persian. It did not concern me, and I paid no attention. Glancing out of the window where I was sitting I saw one of His Highness's guard stationed there with fixed bayonet. As he caught my eye he salaamed and smiled. I could not think at first who he was : then I remembered I had attended him in Turkestan for double pneumonia when he was very dangerously ill. He had recovered, and I saw no more of him till this day : he had grown so plump that at first I did not recognize him.

When the talking was over sweetmeats were brought, and His Highness sent me a plateful from his table. Outside were bands of music : at one time a native band with flageolets and drums was playing, then would follow a brass band, afterwards the bagpipes playing Scotch tunes. In the Hall at the lower end were dancing boys, singers, and musicians. These continued their performances during lunch, which was brought in at three o'clock. For me there was a slight innovation. His Highness ordered a dinner-napkin to be placed on the little table in front of me. The waiter did not quite understand the management of it, for he insisted upon one edge of it being put on the table under the plate and the other on my knees : finally, however, I was allowed to have it my own way, chiefly by the Armenian's instrumentality : learning all about these things was part of his education in England.

After dinner came fruit—cherries and mulberries, and finally cigarettes and tea. Then I asked permission to withdraw and came away.

In August the cholera, which had returned to

Kabul, began again to attain serious proportions. I had drawn up with some care a Paper on the precautions to be adopted to prevent a return of the disease. I was perforce compelled to allow the Hindustani Interpreter — the Gnat — to take possession of it for the purpose of translation. I need scarcely say that I never saw or heard anything of the paper afterwards. The Armenian at this time was very busily employed in translating for some others of the Englishmen, for the supply of Interpreters was lamentably small. In the Hospitals I, of course, could manage without one, but for conversations with His Highness or for the translation of writings my knowledge of the language was inadequate.

Though none of the English were seized with cholera, the climate of Kabul affected the health of most of them deleteriously. Some had fever severely: others bowel complaints; and the gardener, Mr. Wild, a Yorkshireman, who had been working very hard in the sun, laying out gardens and digging, went down with heat apoplexy. He was dangerously ill, and I attended him; but some interesting and engaging scoundrel spread the report that he was shirking his work and lying intoxicated in his room. As he received an order to leave the service I wrote to His Highness detailing the facts of the case. His Highness at once desired Wild to be brought to Paghman, as soon as his condition would allow. When he was taken there His Highness most kindly kept him in the cool air of the mountains until he recovered. After this, Wild, by my advice, wore a turban in the sun instead of a solar topee. A pith

topee would have been a sufficient protection, but there was none to be got in the bazaars, and sending money to Peshawur for anything was a procedure of doubtful success.

One day a soldier on horseback arrived at my house to call me to visit Prince Nasrullah, who, he said, was ill. His Highness at this time was living in a bungalow set in a beautiful garden on the slope near the Paghman Mountains. I started off immediately. After a nine or ten miles' ride we reached Prince Nasrullah's bungalow, and at once I was shown into the room where the Prince was sitting. It appeared to be full of people—Officers, Hakims, Pages, and Chamberlains.

After the usual salutations a chair was placed for me, and tea and cigarettes brought. The Prince held a polite conversation with me for some little while, and I began to wonder if I had not misunderstood the messenger, when he said His Highness was ill. Presently, however, the Prince explained that he was suffering great pain. I enquired where the pain seized him. He said that a worm had partly eaten one of his teeth, and this caused him pain. I thought it quite likely that this would be painful, and asked, might I examine the tooth. An arm-chair was placed in a convenient position facing the window, and His Highness seated himself, politely opening his mouth to allow me every facility in examining the worm-eaten tooth.

After a careful examination I gave my opinion that the tooth should be removed. The Prince at once consented to the operation, and a soldier was sent galloping off to the Kabul Hospital for the case

of tooth instruments. The Prince conversed with me cheerfully for a time while I smoked. By-and-by he seemed to become thoughtful, and presently he said he was a little doubtful about the advisability of removing the tooth : perhaps the application of a suitable medicine might relieve the pain and check the disease. I explained that the immediate pain might indeed be removed by a medicine, but that it would probably return, and that the disease had made such progress that the tooth would, if left, be a source of constant annoyance. His Highness was silent for a time, but presently he expressed his doubts as to the possibility of extracting the tooth ; so far as he could judge there was nothing but a shell left : was it not exceedingly likely that the shell would crush up and leave him in a worse plight than he at present was ? I said that a calamity of that nature was of course possible, as he in his wisdom had foreseen, but that my hopes and prayers were that it might not occur. By-and-by the messenger arrived with the tooth-case. The Prince again weighed the matter carefully, and he desired the two chief Hakims in the room to consult and give their opinion. I do not know what they said, but they looked unutterably wise.

After a considerable amount of discussion, in which I took no part, the Prince suddenly decided that the operation should be performed. He seated himself in the chair : a Page at my request held His Highness's astrakhan hat : another held the chillimchi or spittoon : and a third a silver cup containing water.

I suggested that His Highness should seize the arms of the chair and hold them tight ; then he

opened his mouth. An attendant handed me the forceps, which had been warmed : I fitted them round the neck of the offending member and pushed them well home : a twist of the wrist and the tooth was out. His Highness made no remark during the operation, but at the critical moment he patted his feet on the ground. He was, I believe, exceedingly gratified that the operation was successful, for not only did he present me with a suit of clothes, which unfortunately were much too small for me, but he politely said that the operation had not hurt him.

Glancing up as soon as it was over, I saw that the soldiers of the body-guard had formed themselves in double line from the window down the garden, and were forming an interested row of spectators. Immediately afterwards several of them begged me to perform a similar operation upon them. I glanced at the Prince for permission, which he kindly granted : then seating the men on the ground one after another, I removed such teeth as they desired. One reservation alone I made : when a tooth had not the slightest appearance of disease—not a speck—I refused to extract it, at any rate that day. The unfortunates who could not have their teeth out seemed quite hurt : why should I draw other men's teeth and not theirs? I promised, therefore, to do them this favour as soon as they could prove to my satisfaction that their teeth were " worm-eaten."

One day, a fortnight or so after this, I went with Mr. Pyne, Mr. Collins, and some others of the English, to Paghman to hold a discussion before the Amîr concerning two of the Englishmen who

had allowed their disgust of Oriental life to influence their conduct, and being *ennuié*, had for some time indulged unduly in alcoholic stimulant. His Highness treated the whole matter as a joke. One of the workmen being unnecessary was allowed to resign. The other was to stay. As the latter was exceedingly well acquainted with the manufacture of war material His Highness decided that if he would work two days in the week he might employ the other five as best pleased him. This decision had a beneficial effect upon the man, and he worked well; previously his excesses had had a very serious effect upon his nervous system.

During the conversation that followed the discussion Mr. Collins happened to mention the game of chess. His Highness said he should much like to see the game as played by the English. Mr. Collins at once challenged me. It was years since I had played regularly, and the last game I had had was in Turkestan, when my opponent, after beating me ignominiously, had finally given me a game out of courtesy: I never was any good at chess. I said I would play Mr. Collins if His Highness would give me the benefit of his advice.

The Amîr said certainly he would do so. Accordingly the chessmen were brought. A table was placed in front of His Highness, Mr. Collins sat one side and I the other, and the game began.

I soon found I was no match for Mr. Collins, and I relied almost entirely upon the Amîr. I wish I could remember the details of the game, but I simply made, mechanically, the moves that the Amîr directed. We won the game. Mr. Collins said His

Highness played a bold game with his Castles, and that he would take a good second class among the chess players of London.

After that Collins played one of the Courtiers and beat him. This old man was reckoned to be one of the best players next to His Highness, and the Amîr made such unmerciful fun of him for losing, that the old man wanted to go out and hang himself. However, he was not allowed to do so, for His Highness challenged him to a game and beat him. Mr. Pyne and the others not interested in chess had departed. For us who stayed, dinner was served, and we left the Palace at two in the morning.

Meanwhile the Armenian had been for some little while preparing winter quarters for me in the west wing of my house, which faced south and was protected from the winds.

I had told him that there was no need to make these elaborate preparations, as I was going away on leave for the winter. He answered—

"Per-haps! Per-haps not! I make him ready."

As the autumn was drawing to a close I began to wonder whether leave would indeed be granted to me for the winter according to His Highness's words. I wrote, therefore, to enquire. His Highness answered that in view of the fact that the cholera, though doubtless dying out, was still lurking in the town, he should wish me to remain in the country till the following spring.

I was glad of my winter quarters.

Work at the Hospitals went on as usual until November, when I was sent for to Paghman to paint the portrait of Prince Mahomed Omer.

Cholera had died out, but small-pox invaded Kabul, and in its train came erysipelas.

In Paghman I was located in a khirgar—the Turkoman wigwam I have described. It was also my studio, the light being obtained by moving a flap of canvas from the top.

Before I commenced the portrait Her Highness the Sultana sent me a present of sweets and cashmere embroidery, and when all my preparations were complete the little Prince, accompanied by his tutor and Page boys, came for the first sitting. He asked me to make a sketch of him on paper before I began the painting. I did so, and handed it to him. It seemed to amuse him highly, for he threw back his head and laughed heartily. Whether the act was a childlike mimicry of his father or not I cannot say, but it reminded me most strongly of the Amîr. After that when he came for a sitting he was always merry and bright, and I managed to get a really expressive likeness of him. He was dressed in a gold-embroidered military tunic, hussar fashion, trousers, high boots, and a fur busby. On the breast was an emerald surrounded by pearls. The belt was profusely adorned with diamonds, as was his watch chain; and on the busby was a large emerald. His sword hilt and scabbard were of gold. He was seated in a tall chair, made especially for him; over the knees, as the weather was cold, was a beautiful fur rug. On one side of the chair stood his "Commander-in-Chief," Mahomed Omer, son of Perwana Khan, and on the other a Page boy—a slave taken in war, who had a singularly pretty face. This boy, however, had not the intelligent expression

of the Prince, nor had his eyes the brilliancy of his master's. It was simply a pretty, weary, mournful face, and therefore in the picture it did not take from the beauty of the Prince's face. The "Commander-in-Chief," though intelligent looking, was plain, so that in looking at the picture the eye was caught immediately by the Prince's face.

One day the Prince presented me with a slave boy, telling me to choose which of his Pages I preferred. It was rather an embarrassing offer, for one cannot refuse a gift from a member of the Royal Family, nor in fact from any Afghans without offending the giver. Of what use was a small slave boy to me? True, I could sell him, or give him away, but my principles were not in accordance with that line of action. I therefore told His Highness that I was busy just then with the painting, but that I would consider the matter and let him know in the course of a day or two which boy I preferred. His Highness forgot all about it, as I hoped he would.

Another time he heard one of the Page boys speak of me as "the Feringhi." It was remarkable to see the Prince's look of indignation and anger, it so exactly resembled the Amir's. He called the boy up and spoke very severely to him, ordering him in the future to address me as "Doctor Sahib." As a punishment he made him bow to all the other boys and call them "Sahib." The Prince was a little over three years of age at this time.

As there were three portraits instead of one to paint I was some time at Paghman, and became skilled in the art of eating pilau and kourma with my fingers, and eschewing forks and knives, for the Sultana

had insisted upon my being the guest of the Prince. I brought with me, beside my guard, the Priest Compounder, who knew some English, and only one servant, an Afghan. Accommodation for servants was limited in Paghman, and though one could allow an Afghan servant to sleep on the ground in one's tent, one could not have a Hindustani in the same position. In the evenings, after dinner, the Prince's "Commander-in-Chief," little Mahomed Omer, came in. He sat on the ground and chattered away, eating grapes while I smoked and aired my Persian.

While the painting was in progress Mr. Pyne visited Paghman to hold an interview with the Amîr; he came and stayed with me. It was snowing when he arrived, and I found he had fever. As he sat shivering, unable to get warm, I recommended the "sandali" which he had never yet tried. The charcoal was brought all glowing in the brazier; the wooden framework and the quilt were arranged, and we sat on the carpet amidst the large pillows, drawing the quilt over our knees. There is no need to be shaking with fever in order to appreciate a sandali: nevertheless, when one *is* in that unfortunate position a sandali seems one of the wisest inventions of man. Mr. Pyne thought so at the time. I would not, however, say that a sandali is to be recommended when more sanitary means of becoming warm are to be procured. A dose or two of quinine and Mr. Pyne was soon all right.

We went for a ride the next morning up the mountain: the snow was not thick and the sun shone brightly. We reached a gorge sheltered from the

wind, where we could feel the heat of the sun, and got off and smoked a cigar. I did not get much painting done while Pyne was my guest, for the spirit moved him to talk much.

In the dusk of the evening the Priests came and intoned their prayers near my wigwam. "Allah hû, Allah-il-Allah, Ressûl Allah!"

When the portrait was finished I sent it to Her Highness, the Sultana, for approval. She was delighted with it, but suggested that I had perhaps made the cheeks too pink; accordingly I altered it. She wished me to show it to His Highness, the Amîr.

The next day I took it to the Palace. The only available Interpreter being the "Gnat," this gentleman took the opportunity to prevent—as I afterwards found—the report of my arrival from being taken to the Amîr, and I was kept waiting some hours, till at last I got up and was leaving the Palace when I saw His Highness descending the stairs. I waited, therefore, until he approached, and then bowed. He seemed surprised to see me and asked how I was. I showed him the picture which my servant was carrying. He was very pleased with it, and said it was faultless: he added—and this pleased the Sultana exceedingly—that the portrait of the little Prince was exactly like that I had painted of himself, except that it was smaller.

The Priest Compounder, who was with me, mentioned that I had been waiting some hours at the Palace. His Highness seemed both surprised and annoyed. He told me that no report had been made to him of my arrival, and th

there was no reason for my having been kept waiting.

His Highness's words concerning the painting were, of course, reported at once to the Sultana, and she sent word to me that she would be pleased if I remained at Paghman a day or two longer : the Amîr, herself, and the Prince would then be departing for Kabul, and she desired me to accompany the Prince. I was myself to take charge of the picture on the journey, and when she summoned me I was to formally deliver it at the Harem Serai. Accordingly, I waited.

On the morning of our departure six or seven bullocks were slaughtered, by order of the Sultana, and presented to the Paghmanis. The manner of slaughtering was peculiar. The butcher seized the nostril and one horn of the victim, twisted the head sideways over the neck and threw the animal down. Putting his knee on the horn to extend the neck, he drew his short knife and cut the throat : the inevitable " Allah akbar " being shouted at the same time by the crowd. It was a striking but disagreeable sight to see the blood hiss on to the snow : it was so unpleasantly suggestive of what might happen to oneself under certain circumstances. The hopeless position of the creatures as they stood " waiting to be murdered" rather shook my nerves. However, it taught me one thing—that my health was more affected by the climate than I liked to think : for on my arrival in Kabul, finding there were two delicate eye operations waiting for me to perform, I felt I must postpone them for a day or two.

As the whole Court was moving to Kabul the

traffic was enormous. We had first snow, then sleet, then rain, and the road became a quagmire: mud—we on horseback were plastered from head to foot. The Royal family drove in carriages, and those of the Courtiers who possessed them, in buggies and tongas. There were several blocks on the road, but when we got through them we galloped. The picture was put in a palanquin of the Sultana's under the charge of my Afghan servant. The man was greatly amused at a beggar woman by the wayside addressing him as "Bibi Sahib," and asking alms.

For some little time I had been rather worried about money matters, for although acting upon the Amîr's suggestion, I had in August sent a firman for six months' pay to my bankers in Bombay, with orders to collect from the native Agent in that town; up to now, December, none of it had been paid. I wished, therefore, to see His Highness and inform him.

The Armenian being engaged in interpreting for the other Europeans, I had no one to make an appointment for me with His Highness except the Hindustani Gnat. A day or two after our arrival in Kabul this man called at my house, informing me that His Highness would see me that evening. Knowing that the truth was to him as naught, I doubted the accuracy of this information. I was correct in my supposition: he had made no appointment. However, it was quite as well I did not see His Highness, for a day or two afterwards I received a letter from my bankers saying that at last the Agent had disgorged: they were able, therefore, to transmit the money to London. I sent no more firmans to the Agent.

Just before Christmas I was sent for by His Highness. I managed to obtain possession of the Armenian, and taking him with me I went to the Erg Palace. It was on a Friday, and there was no one at the Palace except the Amîr's uncle, Sirdar Usuf, and the ordinary attendants. His Highness was seated at the sandali. He was not dressed in European costume, but was wearing a silken robe and a small white turban. I was afraid His Highness was unwell and had sent for me on that account. Happily it was not so. After tea had been drank he told me that in the Palace when prayer-time came many people prayed, and that there were hanging on the walls pictures representing people—the English Houses of Parliament, and also the portrait of himself that I had painted in Turkestan. In the Mahomedan religion, he explained, it is not allowed to pray in any room where there is a pictorial representation of a man. He said that he wished, therefore, to hang these pictures in another room, and he desired me to paint three large pictures of scenery to take their place: the pictures were to be painted on leather, so that they might last as long as the Palace itself!

He desired me, for the second time, to paint a full-length portrait of himself, and expressed his intention of sending to me four of the most accomplished artists that the country could produce in order that I might give them instruction in portrait-painting. Also, he informed me that my leave of absence would be granted before "Nau Rôz," March 21st.

It occurred to me at the time that with all these

commissions on hand, Nau Rôz and after Nau Rôz would see me still in Kabul.

I do not know what emotion my face expressed, but as I sat holding my turban on my knee, His Highness suddenly desired me to bring him the turban that he might examine it. It was a good "Lungi," of fawn-coloured Cashmere, embroidered on both sides, which had been given me by a patient, one of the Court Pages. His Highness said he was wearing a better kind that he had lately sent for from Cashmere, and he directed a Page to bring it. It certainly was better than mine; a white Cashmere delicately embroidered with silk. It was wound in the Amîr's careless fashion round a Turkestan cap of bright colours. I was admiring it when, to my surprise, His Highness directed me to put it on.

After a moment's hesitation at being covered in his presence I did so, and His Highness desired me to keep it.

Gratification and pride were now the dominant sensations; disappointment vanished into the haze of the past. No longer was "leave of absence" remembered. What was "Nau Rôz or "after Nau Rôz?" Was I not wearing the King's turban? The congratulations that everyone offered when I withdrew from the Presence were received with a lofty dignity suitable to the situation.

I had only a strip or so of canvas, and I painted a head on leather to show His Highness how difficult it was, for me at any rate, to get anything like an effect on that material, and I pointed out the fact that a skin of leather large enough for a landscape was

almost impossible to obtain. A message, therefore, was sent to Bombay for canvas and paints.

On Christmas Day, Mr. Pyne and the other English called upon Mr. Collins and myself, who were living in the town, and after a ride in the afternoon, we all dined together in the Workshops, drinking the health of the Queen, standing. A congratulatory message also was sent to Her Majesty from the Kabul Colony, to be telegraphed from Peshawur.

CHAPTER XXXI

ADIEU TO KABUL

Afghan artists: their "style." Presentation of the little Prince's portrait. His quarters at the Palace: presents. The Prince as a host. After dark, a walk in the Kabul Bazaars. Before the Amîr: the shock: the result, landscapes. A fresh commission. The "Gnat's" interpreting. The Amîr's answer. Cogitation: decision. Art pupils before the Amîr. His Highness's criticism. The Amîr's kindly remark:—an interpretation thereof. The miner's dog: other dogs: shattered nerves and surgical operations. The worries of Kabul life. To Paghman: the glens: the spy, and his reception. Sketches. Before the Amîr. A fresh commission. Adieux.

Two days after Christmas the most skilled of the artists arrived at my house to learn portrait-painting. They could all draw, and one of them showed talent of no mean order. The first thing, I found, was to teach them to draw a head life-size: formerly, they would do one the size of the thumb nail. The next, to teach them to draw heads in different positions, and not in the one conventional position to which they were accustomed; after that to show them how to put in their shadows crisply and with decision, having due regard to the relative value of each. For models I called up my Afghan servants and the soldiers of the guard. I have brought away with me many of the drawings of these artists, so that I have an interesting series of "types" of men born and bred in Afghanistan. The most skilful of the artists gave an

almost Holbeinesque look to his drawings. They were perhaps somewhat hard, though he began to acquire, before I left, a freer style of drawing.

How they would have turned out as colourists I do not know, for we never got on to painting.

At the beginning of January I received an order from the Sultana to present formally to the little Prince Mahomed Omer the portrait I had painted of him in Paghman.

Accompanied by the Armenian, I went to the Erg Palace. The little Prince's quarters were in a part of the Palace to which I had never before been admitted. It was a recent addition, built at the extreme west, behind the enclosure of the Amîr's Pavilion, and high up overlooking the moat. I had noticed the building in progress when I was attending the Amîr, and had wondered whom the apartments were intended for. We were conducted up a flight of winding stone steps, along corridors and through ante-rooms, till we reached the Prince's quarters. There were both "winter" and "summer" rooms, and the little Prince himself conducted me in a dignified manner to the different apartments, and showed them to me with great pride.

The winter rooms, where he was at that time located, were warmly curtained and carpeted, and on the hearth, at either end, a great wood fire was blazing. The summer room, more elaborately decorated, opened on to a stone platform or balcony, some twenty feet above the moat, and from here was a splendid view across the Shahbagh Valley to the Baghi-Buland, where the Amîr was building himself another Palace.

In the distance was the Paghman offshoot of the Hindu Kush range.

Sweets, tea, and cigarettes were brought, some Cashmere embroidery was given me, and a large tray of sweetmeats for the servants to carry away. The Sultana also desired me to accept a present of a thousand rupees as soon as it was collected from the "tax-payers." I, however, left the country before it was collected, but I have heard since that the Amîr was so annoyed at the delay that he fined Her Highness an equal sum in consequence.

The little Prince was very smart in a crimson velvet coat, with emerald and diamond ornaments, white cloth trousers, patent-leather boots, and a fur busby.

The accommodation in the Palace for the little man was more elaborate than that provided for any of his elder brothers, and he was deputed at this early age to receive visitors on behalf of the Sultana.

He received Mr. Collins and myself in these rooms some time afterwards, when we paid a ceremonial visit to Her Highness, and after ordering tea and cigarettes to be brought, he proceeded to entertain us in the way that struck him as most suitable—he sent for his toys. They were mechanical ones from London and Paris. There was a musical cat that played the violin, another that sprang from a basket, and so on. He gave a demonstration of their working, watching our faces at the time to see if we were amused. We were duly amused. He seemed highly delighted, for he suddenly ordered us to laugh once more. We promptly obeyed. He asked us then if we would like some sweets: on our assenting, called for pen and paper and wrote an order upon his storekeeper for a tray full.

The writing, however, was understandable only by those who had heard the order given. When the sweets were brought he warned us not to eat them too fast lest we should be ill. He seemed not disinclined to join us, but his tutor hinted to him in a whisper that he had eaten enough already.

He spoke in Persian, and I asked if he understood Pushtu. The tutor said that he did not at present speak that language, but that he was learning. The Prince, eager to show his knowledge, said that, on the contrary, he could speak Pushtu, and he gave us an example. He had apparently picked up the words from some of his attendants, for it was not language such as a Prince should use. When we asked permission to withdraw, the Prince shook hands with us, politely saying, "Khush-amadêd," "Welcome," and we bowed ourselves out.

In January the frost making the ground so hard and slippery that it was dangerous to ride on horseback, Mr. Collins and I went for long afternoon walks. One day, having made rather a longer round than usual, we arrived at the suburbs of the town just as night fell. It was a part of the town I had never been in before; however, there was a moon, and we had a soldier with us. The streets of Kabul, as I have already said, are not straight and neatly paved and lighted. They are most eccentric in their general arrangement, and are lit by an occasional—a very occasional—oil lamp, a saucer of earthenware with a wick thrown in, which gives but a dim smoky light. There were a great many people about, but few took any notice of us or we of anyone. Occasionally someone would say, "The English Doctor," or

"English," and though I wore native costume with turban and cloak, Collins was dressed as a European, with fur cap and coat. A few years ago a walk in the dusk in Kabul would certainly have been fatal to two Europeans, but now—we had no weapons and needed none. There seemed really less danger than there would have been in walking through some of the back streets of London.

At the end of February when my three landscapes were finished, I took them, with some drawings that my pupils had finished, to show to the Amîr.

His Highness was occupying a suite of rooms in the Erg Palace that at one time was Prince Habibullah's Harem Serai. We were shown into a large, well-furnished room with a wood fire burning on the hearth. A small scent-fountain was playing on the table, and the room was crowded with flowers, some cut and some growing in pots. The Amîr being fond of flowers, his Palace is supplied during the winter from Jelalabad, where the climate is always hot.

There were not many people in the room—some half-dozen of the chief officials of the country and several Page boys. The Amîr himself did not look well. He was dark under the eyes and thinner, and he looked as though he had been bled.

I asked if he were not well, and he said he had been troubled with gout.

This gave me a shock, and when I found that he had again called the Hakims to attend him, I at once determined to leave his service at the first opportunity. I had a very vivid recollection of my former experiences under similar circumstances, and had not the slightest desire to have them repeated.

His Highness was very kind and courteous, and he was pleased with the landscapes. He desired me, however, to paint two more, one of them to be a view of Paghman, including the Palace and the Harem Serai.

I was surprised at this and far from pleased, for the snow lay thick at Paghman, and sketching there would be an impossibility for weeks to come. I said to His Highness that there were as yet no leaves on the trees, but he said :

"Khair ast!" "That is nothing—you can paint leaves on the trees in the picture!"

I showed him the work of the art students, and he was greatly pleased with their progress.

As the Armenian was ill with fever I had been compelled to take the Hindustani Gnat to translate, and I said to him :

"Seeing that His Highness has been ill and has not desired me to treat him, he probably does not wish me to return to this country when my leave expires. Enquire if this is so."

The Interpreter said in Persian to His Highness : "The Doctor asks whether it is Amîr Sahib's wish that he bring Mrs. Gray with him to this country when he returns?"

I had not asked this. His Highness answered :

"Most certainly ; I said so before," and addressing me he said :

"I look upon you as one of my household ; I wish you and your wife to live here permanently ; going to England for a time and again returning."

He then repeated his promise of defraying the expenses of the journey and that of the two English

maid-servants who were to be brought ; he indicated the position where a house was to be built for us, near his own Palace, and talked for some time as to the arrangement of the house ; and he said, as regards the veil over the face, that it was, for a European lady, entirely optional.

It was very kind of His Highness to make these promises, but of what use were they to me? I had returned to the country after my first leave because I had promised to do so: I had imagined, and, indeed, had been given to understand, that having tested my good faith, the Amîr would, if he were taken ill, not keep me as a sort of *dernier ressort*, but call me to attend him before he was maltreated by the Hakims. Apparently this was not his intention. Such being the case, his service appeared to me to be no longer desirable, at any rate for a married man. The risks were too great.

I set to work and painted one landscape, and when that was finished and I was waiting for the weather to allow me to go to Paghman, I painted for my wife a portrait of myself in costume, for I guessed I should never paint another portrait of myself in Kabul.

About the middle of March I had again an interview with His Highness: I wished to show him the progress of my art pupils, and to exhibit the fresh landscape. He was then occupying the "Bostan Serai," a new Palace or bungalow which was just completed. It was situated outside the South Gate of the Erg Palace.

I had set the artists to draw a portrait of the Armenian (to ensure at the interview the presence of an Interpreter whom I could trust), and of the

sergeant of my guard. They and the pupils accompanied me to the Palace, the Hindustani Gnat attaching himself to our train.

After passing through a courtyard where there were soldiers and Page boys, we entered the garden of the Palace. I sat on a seat there while His Highness was informed of my arrival.

Some military Officers and Secretaries came through whom I knew and shook hands with. Presently came the two little Princes, Hafiz Ullah and Amin Ullah, pretty boys, with fair hair and white skins. They stopped and spoke to me, and the elder, Prince Hafiz Ullah, showed me some photographs of himself that were taken by an itinerant Hindu photographer who had recently come to Kabul : they were very badly done. The Princes then shook hands and went in to salaam His Highness. They were accompanied by their tutor and several Page boys.

In a few minutes I was called. His Highness was seated in an easy-chair in the porch overlooking the garden. Everyone was standing. The porch was three or four steps higher than the terrace where I stood. After the usual salutations I showed the landscape. His Highness was very interested in it, and I then exhibited the portrait of myself. This he said was faultless. He added, laughingly:

"You have painted the fur the same colour as the moustache, and the turban the same colour as the eyes."

By his direction it was then fixed up on the wall in front of him.

When the drawings of the pupils were brought

forward the Armenian and the sergeant had to stand in position in order to be compared with the drawings. Some of them His Highness praised, some he found fault with, but he expressed himself as being very pleased with the progress the artists had made, and stated his intention of giving each of them a present. Before I came away I said to the Interpreter:

"If His Highness will accept the portrait I have painted of myself I shall be honoured, but, if not, will he kindly allow me to send it to my wife in London?"

His Highness said:

"I would rather see your face here for many years to come than have the best portrait that ever was painted."

I was gratified by the kindness of the remark: but it occurred to me that His Highness had received information concerning my intention of leaving his service.

At this time the English miner returned from Jigdilik, where he had been superintending the Spinel Rubies mines. As there was no room in the Workshops I offered him quarters in my house. He lived in the wing that Mr. Collins occupied.

A day or two afterwards he bought a half-bred bulldog of a man in the bazaar, and he tied it up in my garden. Every evening he went off to the Workshops to play cards with the other men, and the dog lifted up his voice and howled continuously. Looking at the affair from my own personal standpoint, the dog was undoubtedly an abominable nuisance, but from the miner's point of view, probably this was not so. I considered in my own mind whether it would be purely selfish if I told him to

take his dog with him, or otherwise dispose of it: I felt sorely tempted to do so, but I refrained. I did casually remark that the dog mourned greatly when he was away; the hint did not have the desired effect, for the miner shouted cheerily, "Did he?" and he laughed a stentorian laugh. It was an experience to go through, when he and the Armenian shouted jokes at one another in my small winter room. However, he was my guest at the time; but I confess I looked upon it as a special mercy that he was fond of cards and the society of the other English workmen at the shops.

But the dog! I remember it. He began with a short yelp, which he prolonged into a whining howl. Then he began another howl, and ended up with two or three sharp yelps: there were many changes and variations all painfully distinct in the silence of the night. One evening it was almost too much for me, and I nearly gave way: I was about to send a note to the shops, thus:—

"DEAR MINER,—What is the price of your dog? I want to buy it, so that I can, without evil motives being assigned to me, poison it. My nervous system is becoming slowly shattered. Don't apologise.—Yours, very truly, ——"

But then, from the miner's point of view, this would, doubtless, be a very selfish and heartless letter, and I decided not to send it.

Distinctly there were dogs enough in the neighbourhood. The Armenian had a dog, and he would bring it sometimes in the morning and tie it up all day. This also mourned: I do not like dogs. It struck me afterwards that perhaps I was

thought to enjoy their music. If the muscles of the face, in an unguarded moment, twitched spasmodically at a more than usually penetrating howl, I endeavoured to change it into a pleasant smile. To a medical observer I should imagine one's appearance at these moments would be interesting.

The day I was nearly forgetting the duties of hospitality in sending a note to the miner, I had had an operation to perform, the removal of an eye : the day before to take a tumour from the forehead : also to put up the broken wing of a heron in splints. Prince Habibullah had shot the bird, and finding it was not killed, he sent it to me to be surgically attended to. In the morning I had to visit and prescribe for a sick tiger : this patient, by the way, broke loose from the attendants, but was to ill to do any harm.

I was not yet able to start for Paghman on account of the rain and the violent storms of thunder and lightning. It was bad enough in Kabul with the roads like quagmires, but up in the hills it would be infinitely worse. It was rumoured that I was to start for home directly the Paghman picture was finished ; it was also rumoured that I was not to start till the end of the summer.

Mr. Collins had for some time been considerably disturbed in his mind, in that he had not been for several months sent on any geologising expedition. He was "severely let alone," and was heartily sick of Kabul life in consequence. The reason of this I have mentioned in an earlier part of the narrative, where I have drawn a parallel between his and Captain Griesbach's experiences. The difficulty in

Kabul is to avoid worrying one's self into misery. It is galling to think that a spy can whisper what he likes behind one's back, and one can do nothing: for being never accused one has nothing to answer; knowing, nevertheless, that some mischief is working. As for rumours, one can believe as little or as much as one pleases, for a report is just as likely to be false as true: there is, however, generally some substratum of fact upon which the structure is built.

At the beginning of April, I received the order to proceed to Paghman.

His Highness gave me a firman, ordering the Governor of Paghman to provide a house; food at the price His Highness pays, and anything else I wanted. Pack-horses were procured, and I sent off the servants with camp-bedstead, table, chair, kitchen utensils, and so on, including tea, sugar, and candles, and corn for the horses, for in Paghman, at this time of the year, there was little to be got from the villagers except meat and bread.

The next day, after breakfast, I rode to Paghman, accompanied by Mr. Collins and a guard. The snow was still on the mountains, but had disappeared in the valley of Paghman. We were quartered in the house of Sirdar Usuf Khan, the Amîr's uncle. It was, of course, empty, except for the furniture I had sent over. We spent the rest of the day wandering about the hills and glens, seeking a suitable spot from which to make my drawings. Mr. Collins brought a gun and shot a few birds; among them was a kestrel. I noticed the wild tulips were in bloom; they had six pale pink petals, each with a darker median streak.

After walking and climbing a good many miles we found the best view of the Palace and Harem Serai was to be obtained from a hilly offshoot of the mountains bounding the north side of the valley: from the Pir-i-Buland peak.

When we got back to the house, one of my Afghan servants told me that an *employé* of the Hindustani Gnat was hanging about in the neighbourhood, and that while we were away he had attempted to enter the house. After we had had dinner, Mr. Collins and I walked in the garden, and I caught sight of the man spoken of. I knew his face at once as a spy. Apparently he had "squared" the guard, for he was creeping in at the entrance. What his object was I never knew, unless it were to peep about and carry a report to his master of what he saw. Mr. Collins and I suddenly stepped in his path and asked him what he wanted. He seemed rather taken aback and said he wanted nothing.

I told him that, as we could not have the supreme happiness of being of service to him, we would not detain him longer; nor would we trouble him to call again lest he should be put to the inconvenience, not to say danger, of being shot at. He did not appear again.

In a couple of days I had finished my sketches, and we rode back to Kabul. I then set to work to paint my picture. Meanwhile, the Hospital work had to go on as usual, and operations to be performed, so that it was the beginning of May before the picture was finished.

I then took it to the Bostan Serai Palace, which His Highness was still occupying, to show him. He

was very pleased, and went over all the details of the picture with interest. The usual tea and cigarettes were brought, and His Highness sent me a plate of sweetmeats from his table. He talked for some time afterwards on natural history and philology, and said he was intending to build another Palace at Paghman. I showed him some vesical calculi I had removed by operation, and then asked when he would wish me to start for England. From the expression of His Highness's face, I saw I had made a mistake in asking. However, the expression was only momentary, and His Highness said I should start at the beginning of the next month. One thing, however, he had overlooked: the pictures—he liked them exceedingly, and would hang them in the Palace he was then using—but for the Erg Palace, for which they were painted, they were the wrong shape; these were longer from side to side; they should have been longer from above downwards. This was indeed the fact, as I saw directly he called my attention to it, and I determined, therefore, to paint three more before I left. But, tobah! tobah! I was very sick of it all. I set to work again and called in the art students to see how the deed was done.

To find what you really can do, work with the "spur" well in. I painted better than I had ever done—though, may be, that is not saying very much.

As soon as one picture was finished I began another, working all day and every day. The Hospitals I left in the hands of the Hindustani assistants and the Hakims; but I was sorry for the patients. One or two cases, however, I attended to:—a Page

boy, whom His Highness sent, and whose finger it was necessary to amputate ; and one of the keepers of His Highness's menagerie, who had been badly mauled by a tiger : a lithotomy operation that had to be performed, and a few others.

While I was at work I received a letter from His Highness, directing me to inform him as soon as I was ready to start, in order that the firmans for pack-horses, tent, and guard might be made out.

Towards the end of May the pictures were finished. I had at this time the pleasure of congratulating Prince Nasrullah on the birth of a son ; and after the pictures were presented, His Highness's thanks received, and my adieux made, I started on my long-deferred but greatly-desired journey home. Mr. Collins, at the same time, sent in his resignation and accompanied me. Just as I put my foot in the stirrup two patients arrived :—the Page boy from the Palace, whose finger I had amputated, and a girl from the Harem Serai, sent by the Sultana. However, I was not very long in attending to them, and at last we were really off.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE ARGUMENT

Afghan court life from an English standpoint. The rise and fall of the Afghan Courtier. Untrustworthiness: the inevitable result. Intrigue: a similar result. Question of "cause" or "consequence." Possibility of raising the moral plane: reasons in favour of. The Amîr's obvious opinion. His Highness's great work. Certain evils. Former condition of the middle classes: present condition: opening of the eyes: comparison with similar class in India. Progress in Afghanistan. Civilizing effect of the Amîr: his influence. Dost Mahomed's rule: his character: comparison with Abdurrahman. Altered condition of country. The Amîr's civilizing measures: drastic measures. Peaceful measures: education: the teaching of handicrafts: of art: the spreading of knowledge: prizes for good or original work. Personal fascination of the Amîr.

THOUGH I have endeavoured, by detailing my own experiences in the country, to give an idea of the present condition of Afghanistan and the character of the ruler, one must not forget that we English in the service were on an entirely different footing, as regards the Amîr, from any of the natives of the country. As outsiders we noted, sometimes with amused, sometimes with painful, interest, many occurrences which, however, concerned us only in the abstract and not in any personal way.

For instance, I have shown that the Amîr has raised men of the lowest rank, even slaves, to positions nearly the highest in the kingdom. Similarly, men of the highest rank are degraded in a day to nearly the lowest. A high official is one day riding through the

streets dressed in velvet and gold, with a great retinue of servants around him : a day or two afterwards, in a shabby coat, he is creeping from door to door to beg a little bread, and I wondered if this state of things were the *consequence*, or is it the *cause?* of an Afghan's utter untrustworthiness when he is put into a position of responsibility.

As an example :—A man is made Governor of a Province on a very moderate salary, and presently the Amîr sees him in gorgeous attire, and surrounded by crowds of servants and horses. We foreigners even could see that the pay did not run to it—it was impossible ; how much more clearly, therefore, could the Amîr see it, and yet the custom was invariable. After a few years the man is recalled to Kabul to make out a statement of accounts as regards the revenue and taxes of the province. He cannot do it. Forthwith his ill-gotten wealth is put in the Treasury, his finery, and the shawls and diamonds of his wives, in the Government stores, and he finds himself, as he deserved, a beggar or in jail. The sufferers—the men who have been squeezed—are the peasants and traders. When "gentlemen" behave in this way it is not to be wondered at that the Amîr makes a slave a gentleman.

On the other hand, there are cases, perhaps, as numerous where a man owes his fall, not to any rascality of his own, but to the combination and intrigue of his enemies. This, I suppose, must necessarily be under a despotic Government, where one man has supreme power. Be he ever so wise and just a man he cannot know everything, and there being only one man to work upon, a clever

scoundrel, who has the *entrée* to the Durbar, and who studies that one man's disposition and moods, can oust a better man than himself, if he works long enough. Sometimes a man compounds with his enemies: each party knows something incriminating about the other, and both keep silent from mutual fear. This state of things has existed not in the reign of the present Amîr only, but for generations.

As a spectator I have watched the play many a time; it is interesting, as I said, though apt to be depressing. Sometimes it is simply a comedy; but more often the ending is tragic.

Are these rapid rises and falls to be looked upon as the *consequence* or are they the *cause* of the moral conditi on of the Afghan? The question is an important one, if we are looking forward to a civilized Afghanistan.

Does an Afghan in power, knowing the certainty of a fall, deserved or undeserved, say to himself,

"I have authority now, but sooner or later somebody will undermine me in the Amîr's regard. I had better make the most of my power while it lasts: get all I can out of other people, and enjoy myself. The evil day may be long deferred."

Looking at it in this way, it is possible to imagine that the condition of things is the cause of his behaviour.

On the other hand, is the moral nature of the Afghan utterly hopeless? I do not mean does he lie, steal, murder, and betray? for we know he has done that for ages; but I mean, is the nation incapable of being raised to a higher moral condition?

Their frank open-hearted manner and sense of

hospitality ; their love of liberty and of home ; their faithfulness (sometimes) to a friend in adversity,—I have seen this in spite of widespread treachery ; the graceful gratitude for a favour conferred : all these seem to show that the moving spirit of the race was once on a far higher moral plane than it is now, and one would think, therefore, that they *are* capable of being raised to a condition vastly superior to their present state.

That the Amîr thinks so is clear, for he has commenced to raise them by a system of education.

To say that Abdurrahman did not come to the throne by chance is to utter a platitude. There was a work to be done that doubtless he only could do. It was essential that the power of the "Barons," the great chiefs with rival interests, should be broken and their constant feuds ended ; that the country should be united under one head ; that there should be respect for authority, and thus a possibility established of drawing the people from the slough of ignorance in which they are wallowing. The Amîr has done and is doing, in this country, over which he has acquired nearly absolute control, a grand civilizing work.

Still, one cannot be blind to the fact that the usual evils of a Despotic Government exist :—the instability of every official appointment : the great evil of the "place-seeker" to which I have referred : the oppression of the poor ; and the grinding down of the peasants and traders. These are enough to sap the life of any government, for there can be no strength where there is no mutual trust.

It is impossible for the Amîr, though like Napoleon he employs a complicated system of

espionage, it is impossible for him to know all the evil that exists. In the preceding reigns the oppression of the middle and lower classes (the backbone of every country) was far greater than it is now, but the people had the continual excitement of constantly-recurring intertribal wars, when every Afghan is a soldier, to draw their attention away from their own miserable condition. Now, they have time to think, and though their condition is far better than it was, they are beginning to see how bad it is—to make comparisons.

That Afghanistan has during the last ten years made considerable strides toward civilization there can, I think, be no doubt in the minds of those who have had the opportunity of collecting sufficient facts upon which to base an opinion. And that this progress has been entirely due to the remarkable Prince who is now occupying the throne of Afghanistan—Amîr Abdurrahman—requires but little proof.

We have only to compare the condition of the country and the "bent" of the people at the present time with their condition a few years ago, to bring out, in a very clear light, the civilizing effect of a far-seeing, strong man's personality.

Amîr Abdurrahman is absolute autocrat of Afghanistan. His is now the only influence that has any lasting effect upon the people. There is no Press to guide public opinion. The influence and power of the Priests has been enormously curtailed. The Chief Priest—the Khani Mullah Khan himself—though treated with respect by His Highness the Amîr, has scarcely more power, nor does he receive a greater share of attention than one of the Civil

magistrates. The opinion of the Amîr, delivered in open Durbar, is the keynote from which all tunes are played. It is caught up by the Chamberlains, the Court Officials, and Pages; it reaches the bazaars, and soon the people join in the chorus. It is woe to the man who utters a discordant note: people look at him askance and draw out of his neighbourhood. Attention is directed to him, and unless he alters his note he is—dismissed from the choir.

The Amîr is, as I have said, the Chief of the powerful Durani tribe. This tribe has been from time immemorial more tolerant and more civilized than any other of the tribes of Afghanistan: and from it the native rulers of the country have been invariably drawn. When we consider the Amîr's marvellous personal influence, we can but see it is a happy thing that his leaning is towards civilization and justice.

That it is so can be shown.

What was the condition of Afghanistan no further back than the time of his grandfather, Amîr Dôst Mahomed, the great Amîr—"Amîr-i-Kabir," as the Afghans called him?

Dôst Mahomed was Amîr of the Kabul Province; his brother Ramdil occupied Kandahar: and Herat was held independently by Shar Mahomed, brother of Shar Shujah. This was in 1835. These chiefs were constantly intriguing with Persia and Russia; and their conflicting interests and personal jealousies brought the country into a condition so unsettled as to be little better than anarchy. War, and in its train robbery and murder were so constantly carried on, that it was most unsafe for Afghans, and quite impossible for foreigners, to travel

from one city to another. So suddenly did fighting break out, that when travelling one found one's self in danger of falling into the thick of it. Caravans—such as ventured to start—made long and wearisome detours to avoid battlefields. The more savage of the Afghan tribes delighted in nothing more than the chances thus offered of unpunished highway robbery and murder.

About the year 1850 Dôst Mahomed succeeded in annexing Turkestan, and in 1854 he managed to evict Ramdil from Kandahar. Meanwhile in Herat, Shar Kamran succeeded his father, Mahmud; and at his death came his minister, Yar Mahomed. The Persians at once advanced and took Herat · Herat being the key of India—this necessitated British interference. Sultan Jan, brother of Dôst Mahomed, was put in possession. He died in 1862, and there were many claimants for the chieftainship, each of whom appealed to Persia. Dôst Mahomed therefore advanced with an army, besieged, and took Herat. This was his last act, for he died in his camp a few days after.

While Dôst Mahomed was on the throne it was allowable in Kabul to revile and curse the British openly, and although as a successful warrior, with bluff, hearty manners, and a free accessibility to his people, he was a popular Monarch; nevertheless, there was not a single act he did which in any way increased the material prosperity of his people. To use the words of a skilled and indefatigable observer of facts, Dr. Bellew, of whom one still hears much in Kabul—"Dôst Mahomed, during his long reign, did nothing to improve the condition or advance the domestic

welfare of his people, nor did he introduce a single measure of general benefit to his country. He kept it a close borough of Islam, stationary in the ignorance of the Middle Ages, and pervaded with the religious bigotry of that period, and to the close of his life he defended that policy as the only one whereby to maintain the independence of the country. His great merit is that he had the sense to perceive his own interest in the British alliance, and he reaped the fruits of his good judgment in the ultimate consolidation of his kingdom. But he was a barbarian nevertheless."

Attention has been drawn to a certain resemblance existing between Amîr Abdurrahman and Dôst Mahomed.

The Hon. G. N. Curzon, speaking at the Society of Arts, remarked that the Amîr seemed to possess some of the strongest characteristics of his grandfather, Dôst Mahomed. Without doubt this is so; and one may add that to the strong character of Dôst Mahomed, Abdurrahman unites a high degree of education and considerable stores of information—scientific, artistic, and general—acquired from books, from conversation, and from observation during his travels. To the simple manners and free hospitality of Dôst Mahomed, he adds a dignity and kindly courtesy of manner most remarkable in a man of his strong passions, and in one who is constantly surrounded with adulation and flattery. He is readily accessible to his people: and even when suffering from the pangs of gout will listen patiently to the petitions of the poorest of his subjects, and give rapid though just judgments in the cases brought before him.

From my narrative may have been gathered some idea of the steps that the Amîr has taken to civilize his people and advance them in prosperity. Highway robbery and murder are no longer common in the country; nor is murder or theft in the town Englishmen—Feringhis—have been, for the last six or seven years, travelling constantly between Kabul and Peshawur, and never has there been the slightest attempt to injure or annoy them. Indeed, for myself I may say that at every halting place when the villagers brought their sick for me to attend to, I went among them freely, unarmed and unguarded.

That the Amir should have used drastic measures to bring the diseased state of the country into a condition nearer approaching health, was without doubt a necessity; mild measures would have been misunderstood and completely disregarded. The savage tribes who haunted certain parts of the highway and gave rise to such by-words as "the valley of death," were either killed by the Amîr's troops, captured and executed, or dispersed.

On the other hand, should a Kabuli wish to start business for himself, he has but to apply to the Amîr, who will, for a certain number of years, lend him a sum sufficient for his purposes, and this without interest.

I have related in my narrative how that the Amîr was educating, not merely the Court Pages and the boy soldiers of his Mahomedan regiment, but many others, the sons of gentlemen, whom he was intending for officers in his army.

The educational influence on the Afghans of the Amîr's Kabul workshops must be, and is, immense. The natives work in great numbers in the shops,

being taught by the English engineers who have from time to time been in the service of His Highness, and by the Hindustani *mistris*, who have been introduced from Lahore and Bengal.

Not only is war material produced in the workshops, but various handicrafts are practised there. One body of men is doing leather work—copying English and Russian boots of various kinds; making saddles, bridles, belts and cartridge pouches, portmanteaux, and mule trunks. There are workers in wood—from those who manage the steam saws to those who produce beautiful carved work for cabinets and chairs. There are workers in brass, making vases, candelabra, lamps, and many other things both useful and ornamental. There is another department where they produce tin ware—pots, pans, and cans. The most artistic are perhaps the workers in silver. They make for the Amîr or Sultana very beautiful things: cups, beakers, beautifully embossed tea-pots, dagger and sword handles, and scabbards. Their work is, however, rarely original. The Amîr shows them a drawing or gives them a good English model to copy from.

Everything European is now fashionable in Kabul, and European clothing has become more universally worn by the Kabulis than it used to be even at the time I entered the service of the Amîr. His Highness, therefore, finding that his tailors, though they soon learnt the shape of European garments, had not mastered the difficulties of "fit," sent for an English tailor to teach them. Classes were held on the subject in the workshops and demonstrations given, with the result that such of the Kabuli tailors

who attended greatly improved in their system of "cutting," and obtained much better prices in the bazaars.

I have already related how that the Amîr desired me to start an Art class, and with what success the artists learnt to draw.

It would be tedious and almost impossible for me to enumerate all the different kinds of work carried on in the shops: but I think I have said enough to show that the effects of the workshops, apart from the output, must be immense. There are some thousand or fifteen hundred men at work in them; these scatter to their homes at night and carry the wonderful stories of all they see and do to their friends. In fact, the most popular song of the day is one depicting the life of a lad in the shops. It is supposed to be sung by the mother; but it ends somewhat significantly by the workman being caught in the machinery and killed.

One must remember that this educational system of civilizing is being carried on among a race of men who have been known hitherto simply as fighters and robbers, semi-savages, and who, unlike so many of the races of India, have shown but little if any sign that they were capable of being converted into useful producers.

When I say, finally, that the Amîr offers prizes, and of considerable value, for the best or most original work produced either in the shops or elsewhere, it will be easily understood how much he has at heart the desire to advance his people in knowledge and civilization.

For a man of ordinary intelligence, such as myself,

to attempt to analyze the Amîr's character would be both presumptuous and futile. His intellect, though perhaps more subtile than profound; and his wide knowledge, though more superficial than real, raise him high above those by whom he is surrounded, and by contrast he shines as a brilliant light among the dull flames of his Courtiers. European in appearance, hearty in manner, with a robe of educated civilization, His Highness is Afghan—an Afghan of the Afghans, and perhaps the finest specimen of his race—but yet an Oriental.

We English, in his service, dazzled by the glamour of his strong personality and charmed by the kindly courtesy of his manner, grew to feel an attachment strong and personal to His Highness; but there were those among us of the more observant who felt, as the years passed, that we were but as "Pawns" on the chess-board of this Prince, to be swept off with an unshrinking hand when a move in the game might need it.

Nevertheless, though life at an Oriental Court offers so little that is congenial to the tastes of an educated Englishman; where, indeed, each man strives to harm his neighbour; where truth is not, nor honour; where Vice and Villainy walk at noonday unveiled, such is the fascination of the Man that, had one none to consider but one's self, the temptation, for his sake, to re-enter the life would be almost irresistible.

THE END.

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